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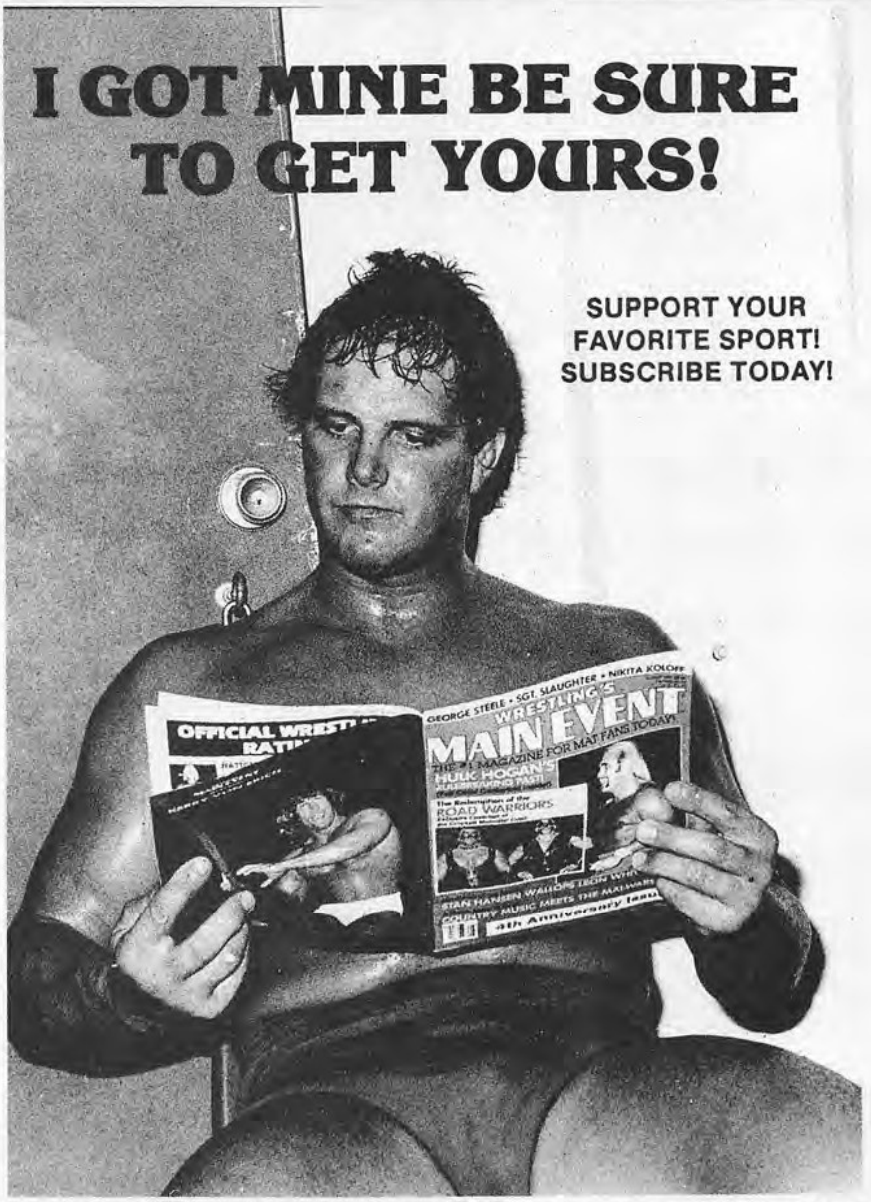

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EDITOR'S CORNER

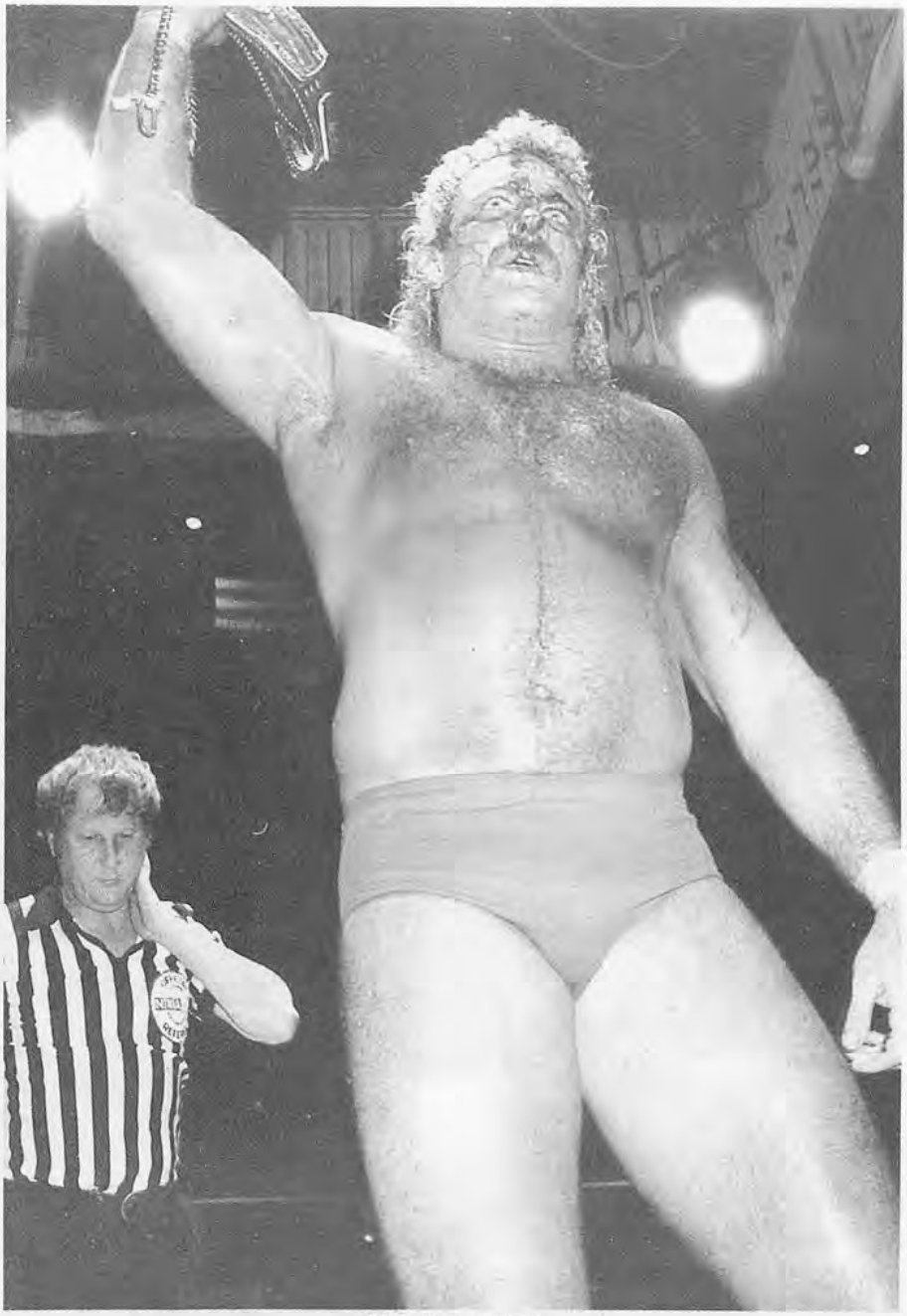
The bottom line from the top rope of WME's Empire State Building offices.

No matter what it may look like coming over the tube, pro-wrestling is not a comic book. There are, of course, The Heroes, and their counterparts, The Villains, but make no mistake: these are real men and women, they are not mutants or refugees from the planet Krypton. They bleed and they get hurt, and they have to put their pants on one leg at a time just like the rest of us. Professional wrestlers may be heroes, but they are not super-heroes of the comic book variety. Like the rest of humanity, they are vulnerable. But unfortunately, sometimes it takes a tragedy to remind us.

Magnum T.A.'s devastating accident served as a horrifying reminder. He is a great man, an incredible athlete and yes, a hero, but he is just a man. His accident made the wrestling world take pause: in a land where the surreal and fantastic are passed off as reality, a devastating collission snaps us back to the real world, makes us take pause and reconsider just where we stand in the grand scale of things.

As you most likely know by now, Mike Von Erich died on April 16, 1987 (see obit on page 18 —Ed.). His death was ruled a suicide, the result of an overdose of sleeping pills. Mike was 23 years old.

The point of all this is that wrestlers do not live in a vacuum. Professional Wrestling may seem like a dream world, where the good guys tangle with the bad guys and the righteous usually win out, where violence is not only justified but glorified, and where mere mortals rebound from incredible punishment. But all of this happens inside The Ring, the very magical squared circle. Outside the arena, after the last bell has rung, while the floors are being swept and the folding chairs stashed away, life goes on in a very ordinary—sometimes glamorous, sometimes mundane—way.



He's just a man.

Photos by Robert Riddick

It is horrifying to see our heroes struck down in their primes, and I almost feel guilty that this is the topic of this month's *Editor's Corner*—this is usually an upbeat column. But before we move on to the spotlight and dig into another issue of WME, let's take pause to remember that wrestlers are people too. Athletes, achievers, heroes—great people to be sure—but just people. And perhaps that's why we love them so much.

■ MIKE EDISON

LETTERS
To The Editor

WRESTLE-MANIA: PRO

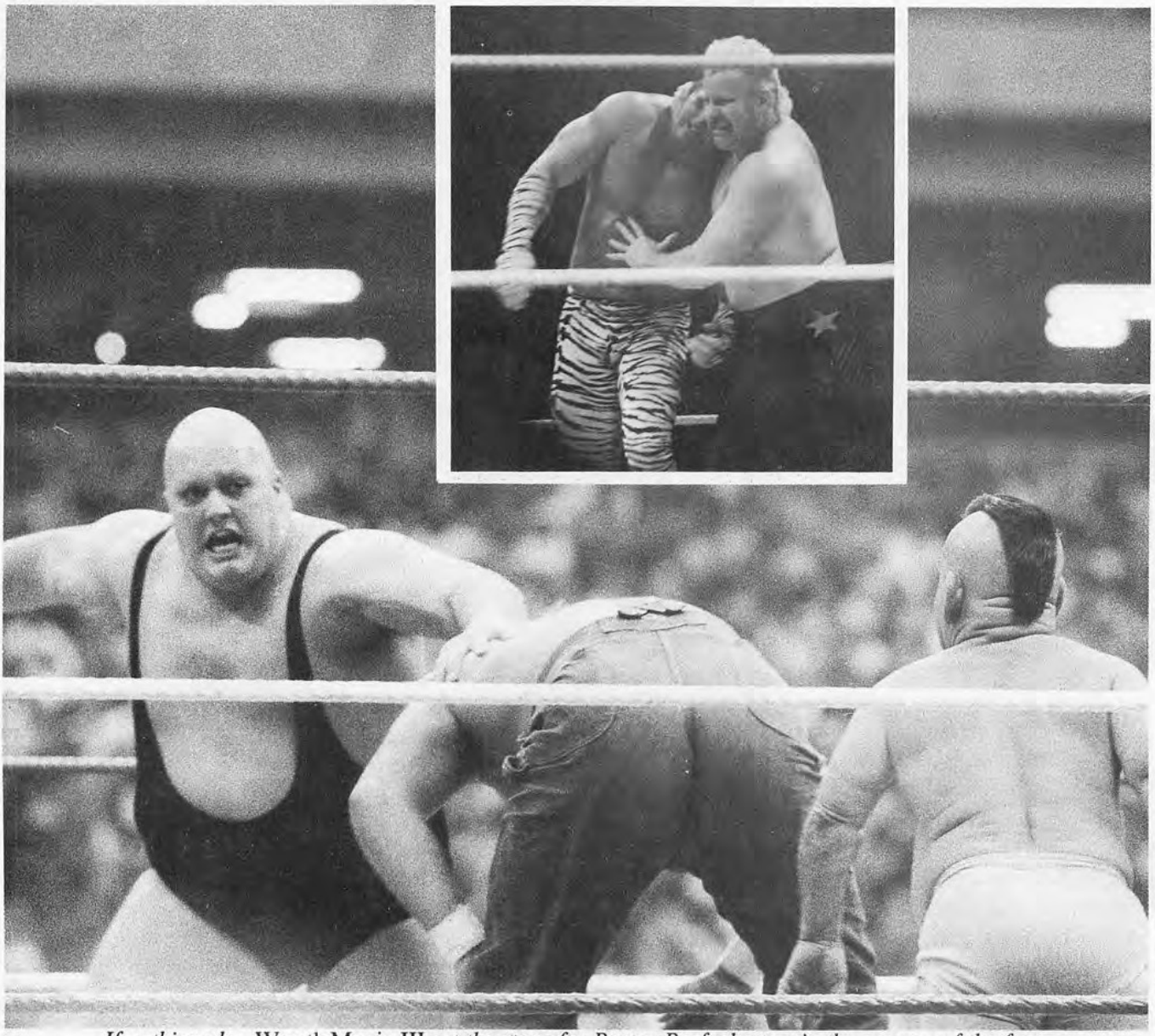
I'm tired of hearing people complain about the WWF. I know that there is a lot of talent elsewhere, but the WWF has wrestling's greatest champion, Hulk Hogan. Hulk and the WWF proved to every one at *WrestleMania III* that they are truly the greatest, Hulk by slamming and pinning Andre the Giant and the WWF by making this the biggest and best wrestling event ever.

Tim Dorman
Lancaster, PA

WRESTLE-MANIA: CON

I agree with Jim Schuermann's analysis of *WrestleMania III:* it sucked. Almost all of the matches were boring, poorly conceived and executed like slobs. Thanks to WME for telling it like it is. Your reporting (especially Jim's) was right on the money. If that title match didn't prove that Hogan and Andre know zero about wrestling, then there is no hope for wrestling fans. I'll take Ric Flair anyday—leave the Huckster for the six year old mouth-breathers with runny noses.

Bobby Svorsky
Portland, ME



Photos by John Barrett

If nothing else, WrestleMania III *set the stage for Brutus Beefcake to win the support of the fans.*

COLLECTORS EDITIONS

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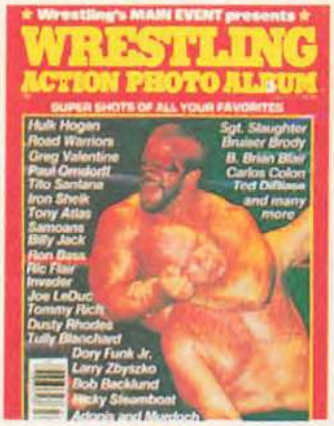

PHOTO ACTION ALBUM 2

WME's PHOTO ACTION ALBUM 2. The second volume of what is destined to be a classic series of wrestling publications. Another thrilled packed action photo album of the greatest stars of the squared circle in all their brutal glory. Many of your favorite stars are depicted on every page.

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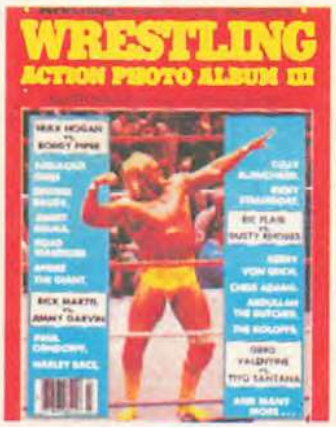
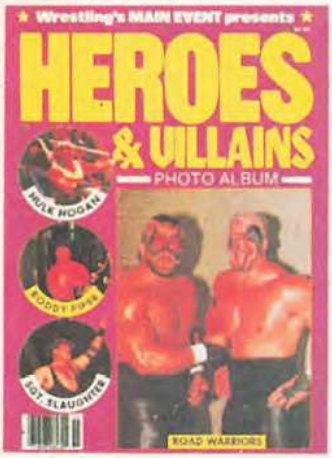


PHOTO ACTION ALBUM III

WME's PHOTO ACTION ALBUM III is the third in the trilogy of these exciting pictoral publications. As in albums one and two, this magazine concentrates on capturing the leading mat-stars of today in the act of mortal combat, and our top-notch photography is high-lighted by our bold full-page format.



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HEROES AND VILLAINS is WME's way of presenting our readers with a magazine strung cover to cover with close-up portraits of some of the most popular stars of the Squared Circle, along with some of the most despised, all neatly cropped on our trademark high gloss paper and suitable for framing. Don't be the last one on your block to have these great pictures hanging on *your* wall!

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CHAMPIONSHIP MATERIAL

WrestleMania III was objectively the biggest wrestling event ever, making as much money in a few hours as the contras do in a year. Sure, it wasn't great, but it was damn good. But WME's coverage and reporting were excellent. You guys told what was good about it and weren't afraid to say what was wrong. Other magazines either white-washed it or wouldn't admit how successful a show it was because they're intimidated by the awesome WWF machine. Like'em or hate'em, you have to admit that they are championship material. Thanks to WME for putting it in perspective—keep up the good work!!!

Marcy Downs
Lansing, MI

Andre proved to be a BIG let down at Mania III.

DITCH DIGGER!

Why haven't you fired Digger Molloy? He's obviously a crusty old man drunk on senility, and I don't believe that he was ever anything but a preliminary bum in his so-called career. Not only that, but his writing doesn't even make sense half the time. I think it's nice that you gave an old matveteran a job but you would be better off if he were back on the soup line.

Rob Willory
Pensacola, FL

DIGS DIGGER

Digger's Diary is the best thing in WME. What a great idea to have a veteran wrestler write a column—and what a column it is! Digger (could he possibly be John Tolos?) is slightly crazed but always original and exciting. Does he really think the Grand Wizard is still alive? I think that's great. Good luck Digger and stay crazy.

Sharon Elway
Baltimore, MD

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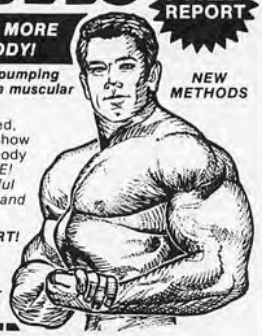

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Who are these guys trying to fool? I'm tired of Road Warriors rip offs, especially an unimpressive team like Demolition. Why does Mr. Fuji think he can make these men successful? They look like slobs and wrestle even worse. The only way they'll ever get anywhere is if they cheat—at least Mr. Fuji knows about that—but I bet they're gone before they even get that far. I was sitting at ringside at a recent match and I got a whiff of those guys: they smell like a barn. The only place they'll go in the WWF is to the showers.

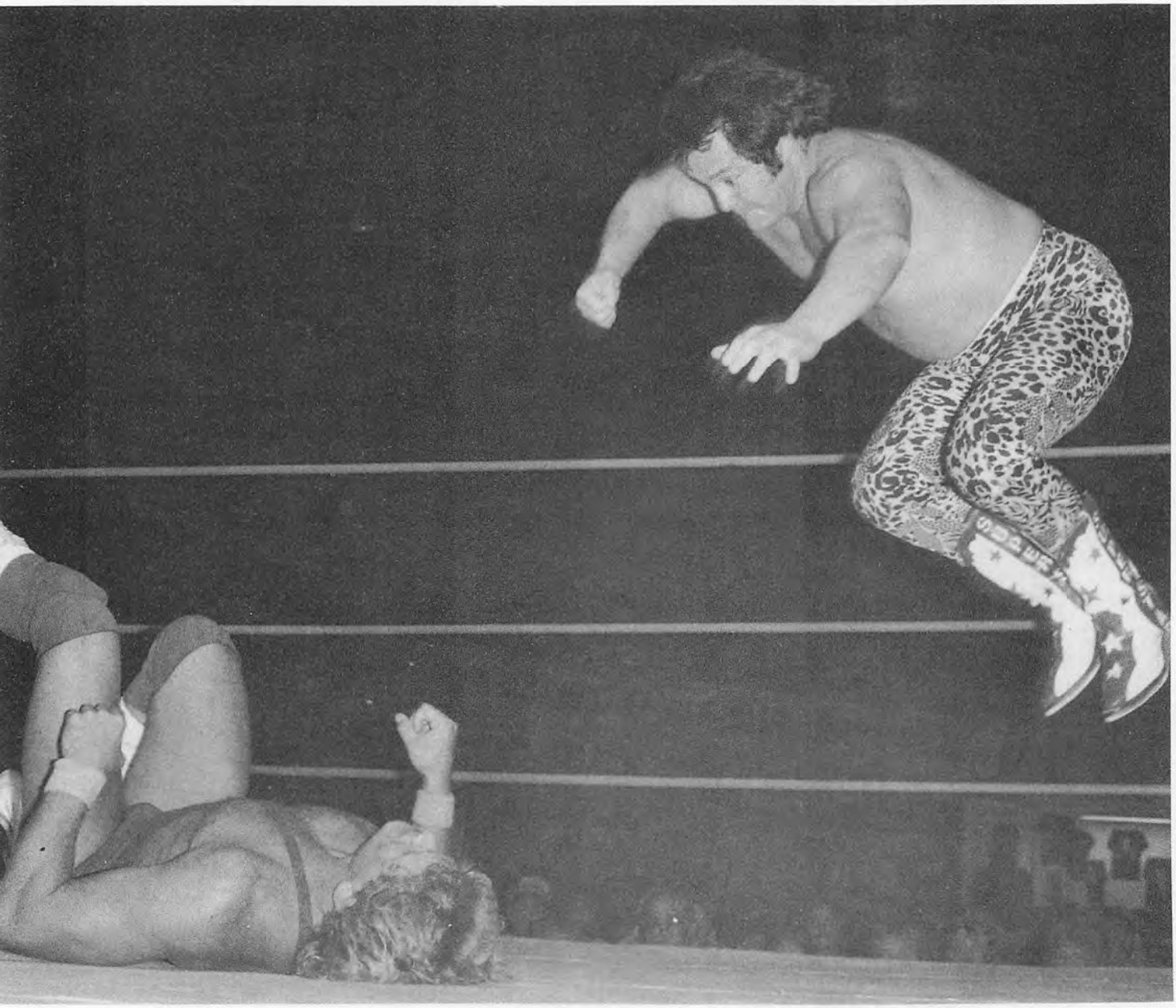
Danny Price
Metuchen, NJ

FLORIDA FAN

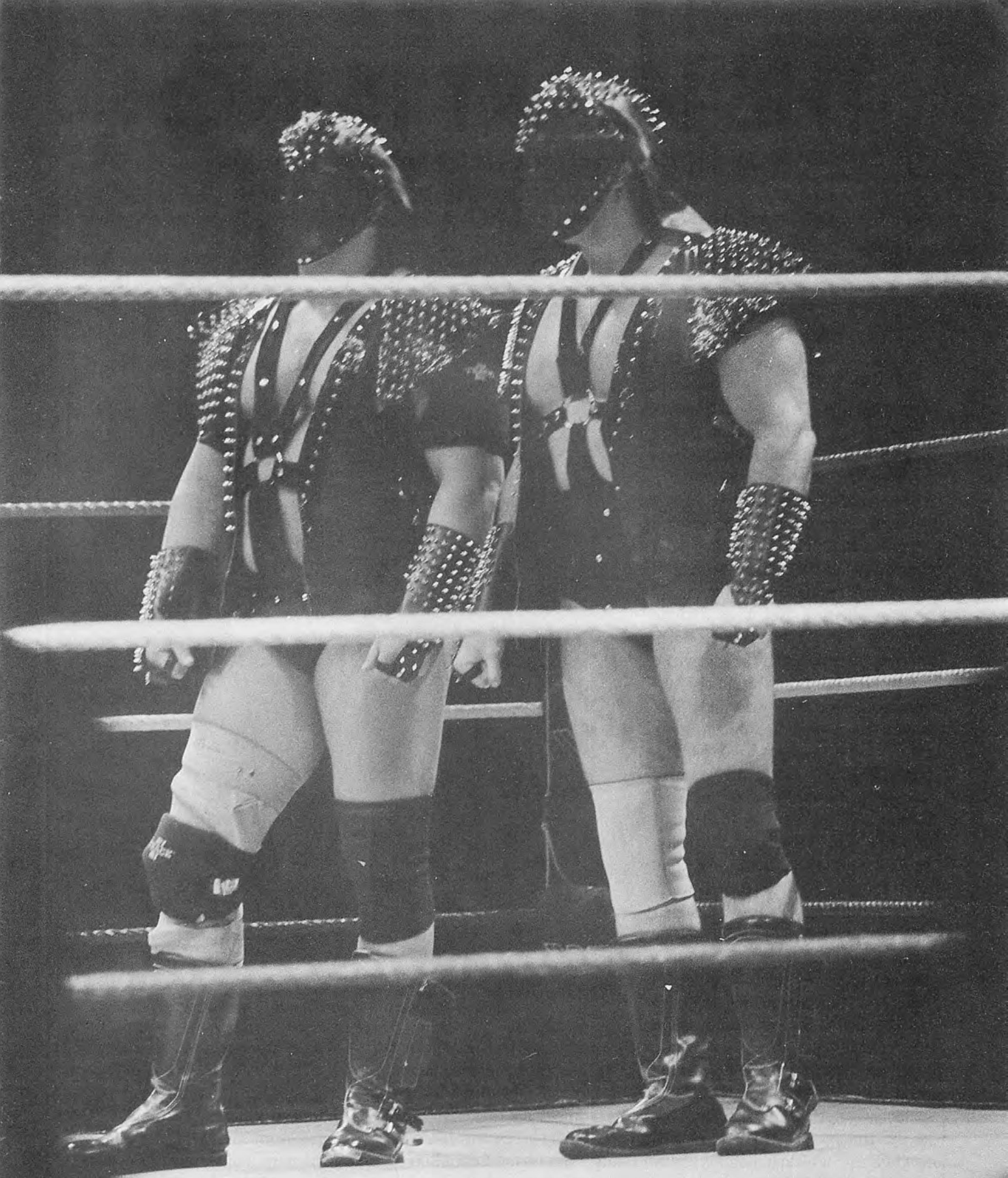
Thanx to WME for always providing the best coverage of the Florida mat scene. The Sunshine State has always been the most vilent and spectacular mat scene, always the last frontier of the NWA, and Bill Otten's photos capture the action flawlessly. Hats off to Bill and the rest of the WME staff!

Nancy Collinwood
Tampa, FL

Thank you, *Nancy. WME has always been a champion of Florida action and we consider it an honor to have Bill on our staff. Not only does he provide the finest photos available, but he's a damn nice guy and always puts up with MAIN EVENT staffers when they're off slumming on their vacations in sunny Florida. And with the Florida scene heating up, you can expect more hot action on our pages and Bill can expect more cheap journalists sleeping on his floor.*



Bill Dundee flying through Florida.



Demolition is a team that really stinks.

THE HEART PUNCH

A no holds barred look at Professional Wrestling, straight from the heart!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? Last week Bruno Sammartino was in New York to make a personal appearance and field some questions from the fans. Expecting a white-wash from the Living Legend, I camped out at the back of the auditorium where my cigarette smoke would be least offensive. But it wasn't long before my ears perked up and a pencil was nestled between my fingers where my Viceroy had been. Bruno was surprisingly candid and entertaining. This wasn't the pasta-stuffed punch-drunk cretin who sits next to Vince McMahon and Jesse Ventura on Saturday mornings, this was Bruno the man and he had a lot more to say than "uh, I dunno, Vince." To start, he called Nikita Koloff a "steroid freak" and went on to speak of how he (Bruno) was a "natural athlete." He accused Superstar Billy Graham of being on the 'roids as well. Okay—no big surprises yet, but still, how many wrestlers of Bruno's stature are willing to be so frank? Just wait—you ain't heard nothin' yet.

Photo by Stephen Pfeffer

Bruno Sammartino: questionable morals.

Bruno didn't have a whole lot of good things to say about Ric Flair, which was not exactly shocking, but he did concede that Flair is a "well conditioned" athlete (citing his ability to wrestle forty minutes or an hour night after night) but he had even less nice things to say about Hulk Hogan. "He's not the best wrestler I've ever seen," Bruno said. "He only wrestles about fifty times a year," he went on, and commented that his matches rarely passed the fifteen minute mark. Bruno also has had some disparaging things to say about his boss, Vince McMahon. "I don't necessarily like what he's doing," the Living Legend confessed, referring to the grandiose marketing and cartoonesque machine The Federation has become. But sure enough, Saturday morning, Bruno was back in the broadcast booth, brown-nosing McMahon and playing dumb. In other words, Bruno sells out his true feelings for a WWF paycheck, only being honest when the cameras aren't running and Vince isn't around. I expect more from the Living Legend, especially now that I know he's got a mind of his own, but apparently his morals could fit easily into Vince's clef chin and still have room left to set up the Steel Cage. Until next month, WHAM! Can your heart stand it?!!!!

■ ART BURNS

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☐ **VOLUME 3** Ricky Steamboat demonstrates all of his dynamic energy as he applies the punishing science of wrestling. Also wrestling are The Great Kabuki, Dorey Funk Jr., Jake "The Snake" Roberts, Jay Youngblood, Golden Boy Grey, Bugsy McGraw, Tom Lenz, Jack and Jerry Briscoe, Rick McCord and more.

☐ **VOLUME 4** "Rowdy" Roddy Piper at his rowdiest. Also wrestling are Chavo Guerro, Ben Alexander, Ricky Steamboat, Jay Youngblood, Tom Lenz, Dick Slater, Wahoo McDaniel, Kelli Kiniski, The Great Kabuki, Greg "The Hammer" Valentine, John Bonello and more.

☐ **VOLUME 5** Featuring NWA Champ Ric Flair at his best. Also wrestling are Brickhouse Jones, Kelli Kiniski, Golden Boy Grey, Tom Lenz, "Cowboy" Bob Orton, Mark Lewin, Kevin Sullivan, Vinnie Valentino, The Assassins, Rick McCord, Rufus "Freight Train" Jones, Bugsy McGraw, Baron Von Reski, John Bonello and more.

☐ **VOLUME 6** A tag team feast featuring The Assassins as they use their destructive forces in an attempt to annihiliate their opponents. Also wrestling are John Bonello, Mark Lewin, Kevin Sullivan, Chavo Guerro, Wahoo McDaniel, Tom Lenz, Rick McCord, Jack and Jerry Briscoe and more.

☐ **VOLUME 7** Love him or hate him, Wahoo McDaniel uses his experience as a linebacker to pound away on his opponents until the final count ends the bout. Also wrestling are Ric Flair, Golden Boy Grey, The Assassins, Magic Dragon, Rufus "Freight Train" Jones, Mark and Jay Youngblood, Kelli Kiniski and more.

☐ **VOLUME 8** See why Mike Rotundo and his partner have repeatedly defeated the arch villains of wrestling. Also wrestling are The Assassins, John Bonello, Chavo Guerro, Magic Dragon, Greg "The Hammer" Valentine, Rufus "Freight Train" Jones, Kelli Kiniski, Ben Alexander, Mike and Jay Youngblood, Ricky Steamboat, Tom Lenz, the Terrible Link and more.

☐ **VOLUME 9** The powerful Rock'n'Roll Express tag team runs full speed ahead into the team of Jake "The Snake" Roberts and The Barbarian. An incredible match that keeps the fans screaming.

☐ **VOLUME 10** Ric Flair vs. Butch Reed. Can Flair handle the heavy hitting Reed? This is a crazed match that takes a different course and leaves the winner angry. This is super star wrestling!

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☐ **VOLUME 12** An explosive tag team free for all between the Fabulous Ones and the Guerros. They brawl in and out of the ring, chairs fly and blood spills. High energy action from start to finish.

☐ **VOLUME 13** Mad Dog Buzz Sawyer in a chain match against Hacksaw Duggan. This one is wild and vicious. The unpredictable Dick Slater hooks up with Jake "The Snake" Roberts in a supercharged match that keeps the crowd screaming and guessing.

☐ **VOLUME 14** Ted DiBiase and Bob Sweetan get it on as soon as the introductions are done. In and out of the ring it is war as chairs become weapons. Isn't Adrian sweet? Don't let the pig-tails, nylons and make-up fool you. Terry Taylor isn't fooled as these two show you what wrestling is all about.

☐ **VOLUME 15** Kamala The Ugandan Giant stomps on Hacksaw Duggan but that is not the end of this match! The Bruise Brothers and the Sheepherders hook up in a tag war. Jake "The Snake" Roberts and Humongous let it all out in a cage match. There is no escape.

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DIGGER'S DIARY

The modern mat-world as seen through the eyes of an outlaw ex-champion!

I'm an ex-con myself. More than that, a convicted felon. Like Ken Patera, I cannot vote in an election. What did I do? I refused to testify before the House Internal Security Committee about Communist infiltration of the anti-Vietnam War movement, but that was only a few days in the clink after a long night in a special holding cell full of DWI white trash. The toughest match I ever had—no Pearl Harbor job in the ring can match a cage full of rednecks drunk on patriotism. I emerged from the can as angry and embittered as you could expect, so I became a wrestler so's I could pummel sanctimonious jerks into bloody oblivion for fun and profit.

I may not be able to vote for Senator Paul Simon, but I consider myself a true patriot. I've wrestled and traveled thrice around the planet, and this is the most beautiful place we've drawn borders around. I love the cool water in America, I love the culture, I love the guts and tenderness and variable climates and races. Why do you want to move to America, they asked the Peacenik Beatle who got blown away in New York City. He'd stare at the interrogator as if she was batty and reply, "Because this is where it's happening. Never mind the problems, everybody's got them—wouldn't you want to have lived in ancient Rome?" And that, my friends, is a sweetly decadent love of America that I share, that goes beyond politics and hypocritical multicorporations poisoning the environment.

Ken Patera can't vote either, and he can't speak coherently to boot. If they still had literacy tests for voter registration, he'd never had a chance. The man who got dungfaced drunk and punched, choked, and headbutted several police officers served his time and returned to the WWF, which must somehow be a parole violation but if nobody else cares I certainly don't. Patera's one of these guys who thinks he's Sgt. Slaughter because he's an Olympian (big deal) and wants to cynically court the fans by strutting around with the flag in his teeth. "America gave me a second chance. . . ." Whaddaya expect, pal, life imprisonment for a wealthy white athlete? No need at all to get sanctimonious about a "second chance"—it could have been a lot worse. You're damn lucky to work in a profession that will give you a job—at least one promoter will. Which is great, don't get me wrong, but how does it look on your resume?

Ken Patera: He's lucky he has a job.

Let's face it—you're an exception to the rule that ex-cons generally *don't* get a second chance, and that is due to your prestige and athletic ability. Leave the Flag out of it—it's already been besmirched by hypocrites like you for two hundred and eleven years.

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WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

A monthly report on all the latest happenings in the world of Professional Wrestling . . .

BEEFCAKE THE BEAUTICIAN

Beautiful **Brutus Beefcake** seems to have found a new vocation. Somehow it comes as no surprise that the Beefer has declared himself the WWF's resident hair-stylist.

In a televised match-up between Beefcake and his former manager **Johnny Valentine,** Beefcake pummeled his elder and proceeded to clip Johnny's hair into a less-than-fashionable punk rock do. Apparently, Brutus has had more experience styling hair than just *WrestleMania III,* where he helped **Piper** trim **Adrian Adonis'** mane into a burly mess. Since then, Brutus has donned a white beautician's coat and is clipping his way through the WWF. At least he has something to fall back on.

The proud barber and his hack-job handy-work.

Mr. Dillon and a limo as long as New Jersey.

J.J. DILLON: RULEBREAKER WITH ALL THE DOUGH

Since pioneering the historic formation of the **Horsemen,** NWA visionary **James J. Dillon** has maneuvered his way into the upper echelons of the NWA payroll. "It's been amazing," said one NWA insider. "J.J. has always been a force to be reckoned with, but he's close to taking over the entire NWA. He's on Flair's payroll now as an advisor and he also gets commissions for signing title defenses, not to mention all the money he makes off of **Lugar** and **Blanchard.**"

J.J. has both Tully and Lex on campaigns for the US Title held by crowd pleaser Nikita Koloff, a very lucrative path to travel. And while they're earning J.J.'s bread and butter, Flair just makes him richer and richer. ■

Phots by Bob Castelli, Robert Riddick, Jimmy Papa and Steven Beyer

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WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

A monthly report on all the latest happenings in the world of Professional Wrestling . . .

TRAGEDY STRIKES THE VON ERICHS

A tragic event has shaken the very foundation of professional wrestling. Mike Von Erich is dead. Found dead in a secluded wooden area near Lake Lewisville on April 16, 1987, Mike had been reported missing four days earlier by his family.

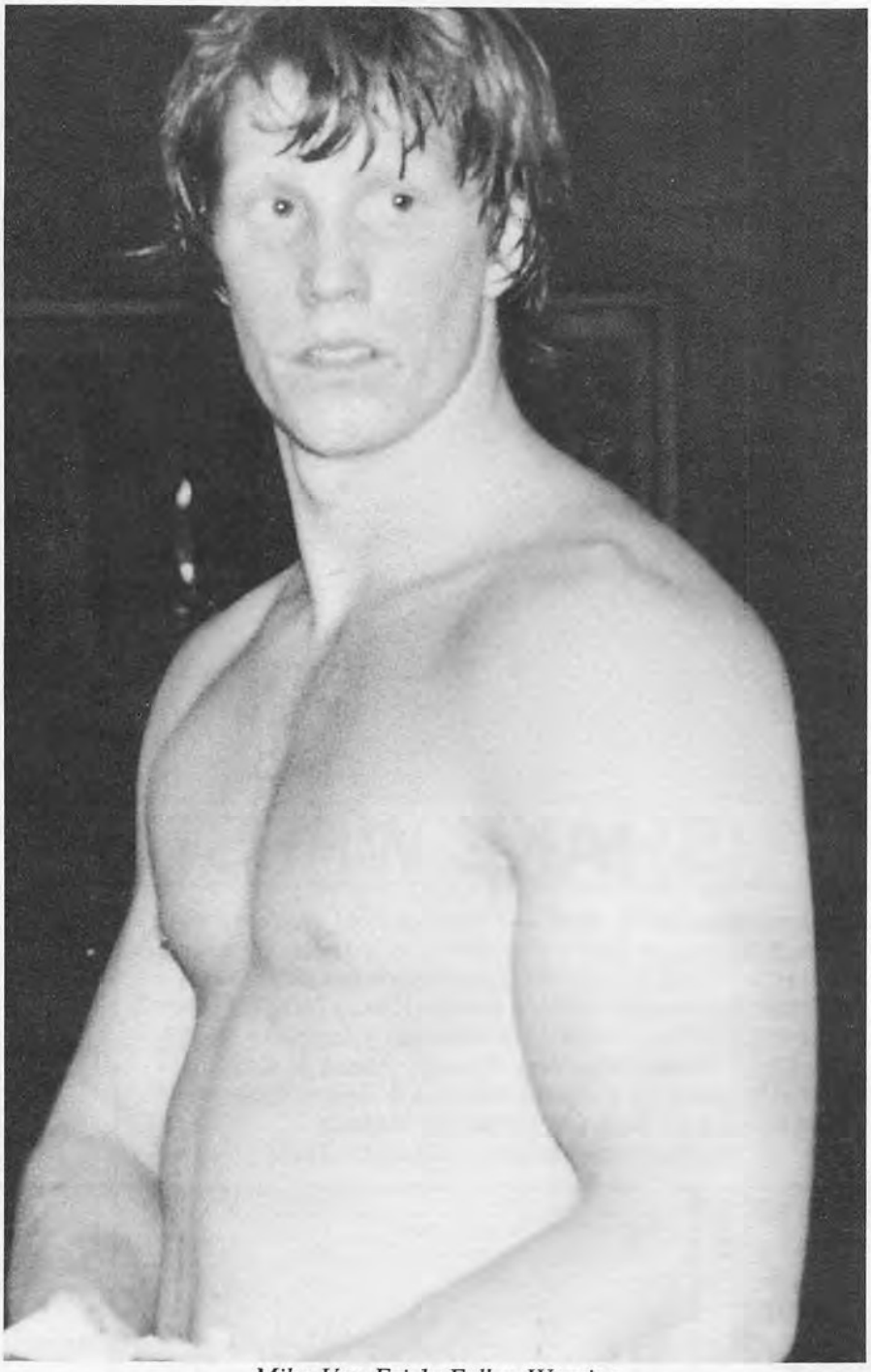
According to early reports Michael Brett Adkisson died of an overdose of prescription tranquilizers April 12. Mike was 23 years old.

During Mike's four year career he was American champion and a World Class 6-man tag team champion with his brothers. Unfortunately, Mike never had the opportunity to try and prove himself outside of the World Class area.

Mike faced many setbacks in his private and professional life. Suffering severe shoulder injuries in 1985 Mike was hospitalized where he soon contracted Toxic Shock Syndrome. Out of wrestling for more than a year, Mike faced numerous drug problems. He was in a drug rehabilitation program a good amount of the time he was out of wrestling.

Through it all the World Class fans showed their unending love and support for Mike Von Erich. To the fans, Mike Von Erich could do no wrong.

On April 11, the day before he died, Mike did not show up for his match that evening. Later that night Mike was arrested for driving while intoxicated and possesion of marijuana. Mike was released the same day and a few hours later disappeared. Mike was not seen again until his body was found four days later.



Mike Von Erich: Fallen Warrior.

The entire staff of WME would like to offer our sympathy and condolences on this tragic event. Our best wishes go out to Jack and Doris Adkisson and the rest of the Von Erich family. ■ *(reporting by J.D. Woodall)*

WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

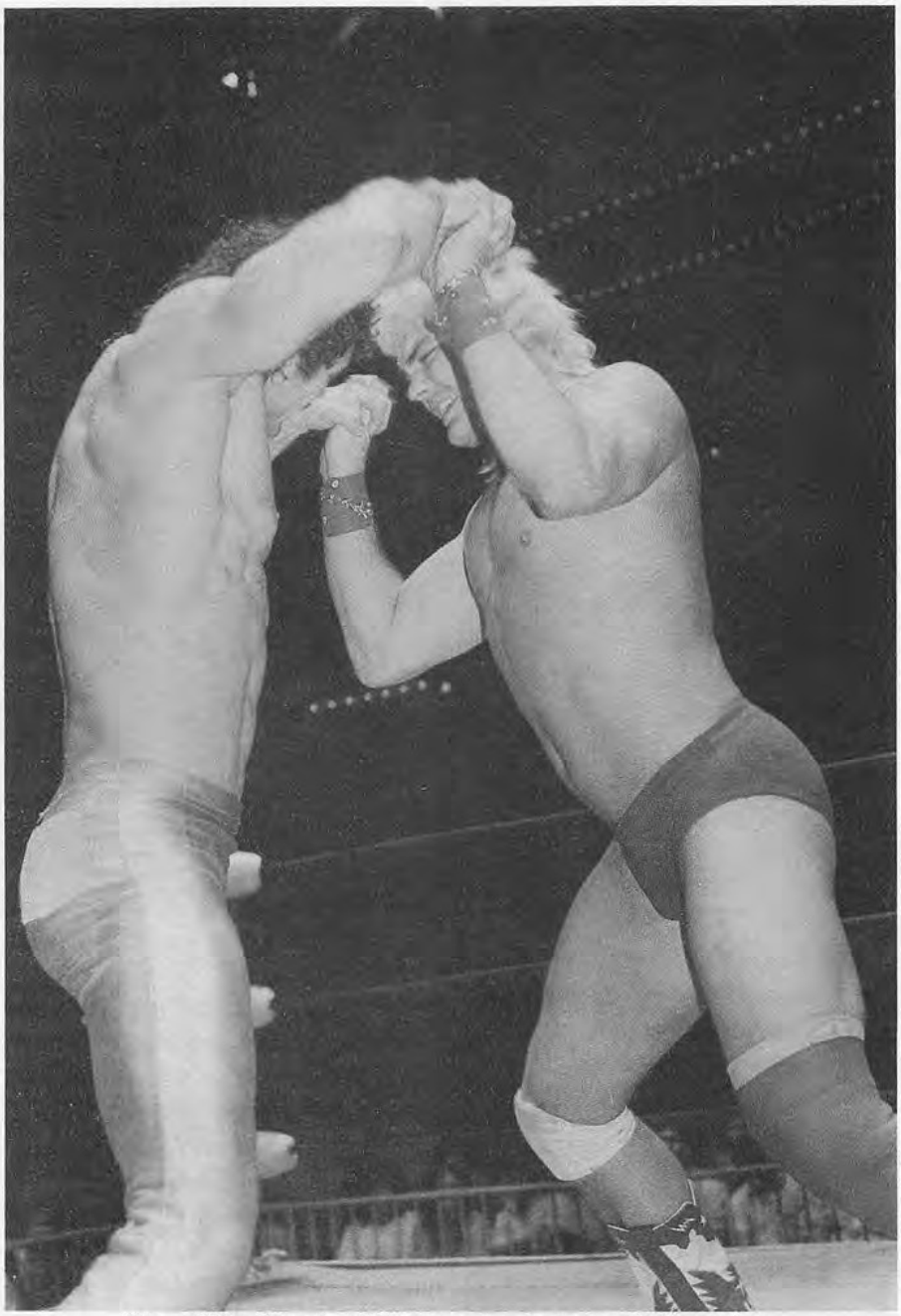
A monthly report on all the latest happenings in the world of Professional Wrestling . . .

In other wrestling news, the WWF continues to expand its talent roster in an almost wanton fashion. Joining the ranks in just the past few weeks have been **Killer Khan,** under the managerial reigns of Mr. Fuji, who will most likely make the move to topple Hogan, and of course, the all new **Ken Patera.** Patera, just coming off two years of hard time, is blaming all of his troubles on **Bobby Heenan** in what may be an all time low in poor taste. (See Digger's Diary—Ed.) . . .

Also joining the ranks of the WWF recently is **Dennis Condrey** who left the Midnight Express to pursue who knows what in The Federation . . . the hole he left in the **Midnight Express** is being handled rather handily by **Stan Lane. . . .** Lane and **Bobby Eaton** are scheduled to go against **Ronnie Garvin** and **Barry Windham** to fill the vacant US Tag Belts.

Dusty Rhodes is making his move towards the NWA TV strap, challenging **Tully Blanchard** to a $50,000 match up, raising the $10,000 Tully has been offering to anyone who can pin him. . . . **Ric Flair** is also facing a new challenge from **Jimmy Garvin,** who has been pleasing the fans of late . . . the match was signed after Flair took a rather vocal and obnoxious liking to Jimmy's squeeze **Precious,** but it is a rare opportunity for the Gorgeous Garvin. . . . Also challenging Flair have been **Dick Murdoch** and the ever-popular **Barry Windham,** who has surprised many by not coming up with a conclusive victory. . . .

The big tag team in the NWA is still the **Superpowers, Dusty** and **NIkita** . . . the two of them took the **Crockette Cup** without much difficulty and dedicated the victory to **Magnum TA,** who is up and around and beginning to make public appearances (See stories this ish—Ed.)



Barry Windham is doing more tag team work these days.

The AWA continues to travel the country and managing to stay out of the spotlight, and it's no wonder . . . World Champ **Nick Bockwinkel** is still defending against mediocre competition in the form of **Curt Hennig** and **Leon White. . . .** Former AWA strap-holder **Otto Wanz** has joined the ranks again but is looking sluggish in matches. . . . **Buck Zumholfe** is getting beaten up regularly by **Sheik Adnan Al-Kaise** and one has to wonder

WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

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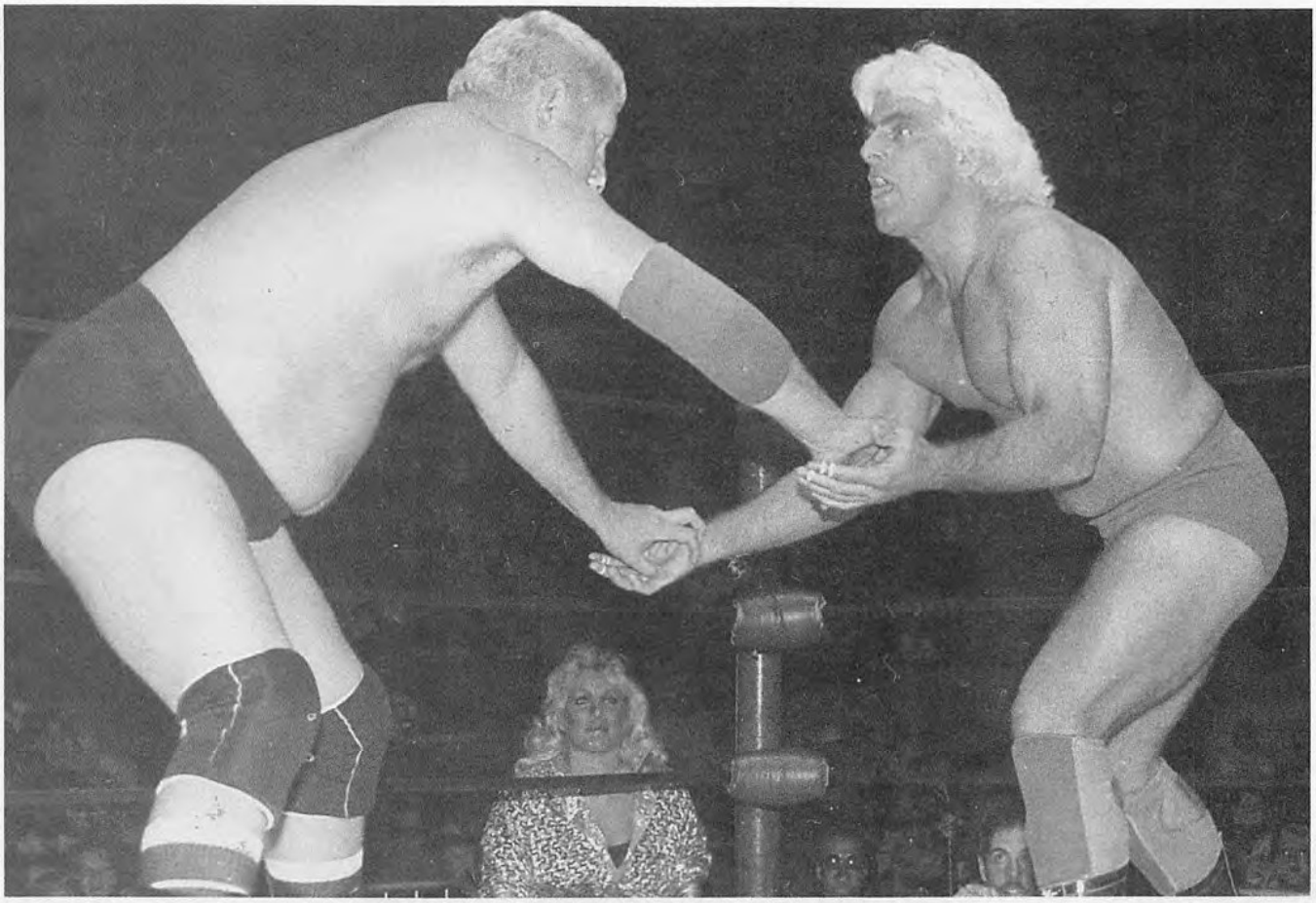
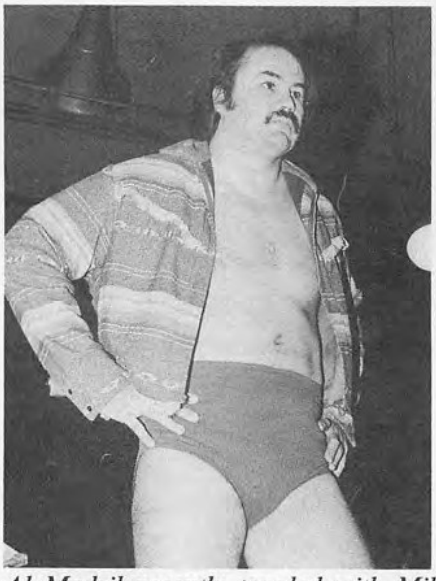


Dick Murdoch has earned himself a few title shots.

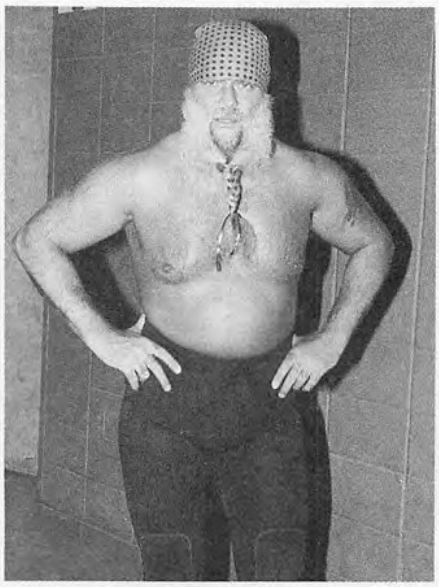


Al Madril recently tangled with Mil Mascaras in what was a very classy match-up.

why he doesn't just call it quits . . . and **Larry Zybyszko,** arguably the hottest talent in the AWA, is still waiting for a title shot or a better offer. . . .

Despite the tragedies that seem to be plaguing the Von Erich family, World Class Action has been getting better. A recent card featured **Mil Miscaras** tangling with **Al Madril,** two of the finest to ever step in the ring. . . .

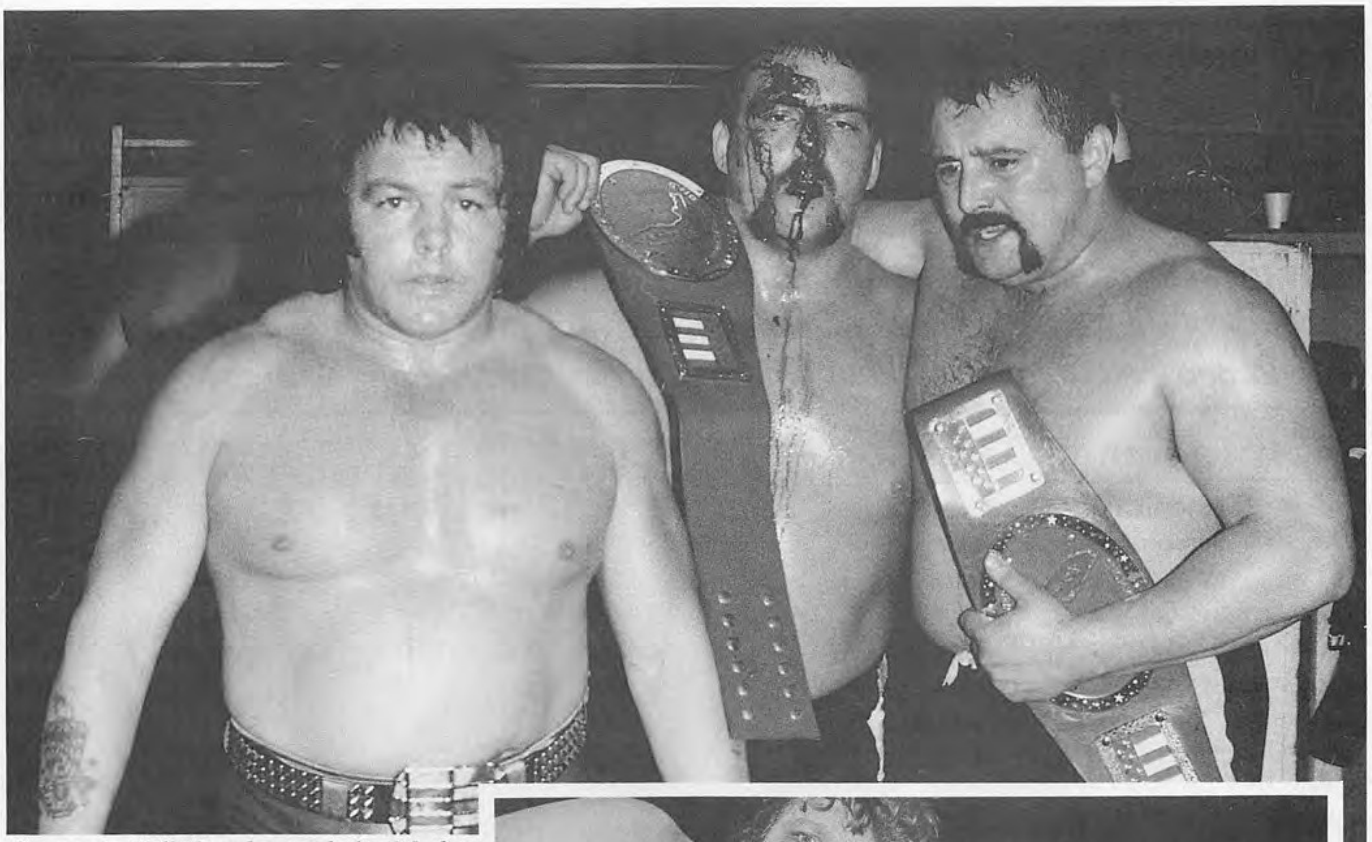
In Florida, the rulebreakers seem to have taken over. . . . **Kevin Sullivan** is up to his usual blood-letting, feuding with celebrated bleeders **Jimmy Valiant** and **Wahoo McDaniel. . . .** Sullivan is also rumored to be gearing up to slaughter **Dusty Rhodes,** who has been spending more time in Florida lately. . . . "Dusty brings out the worst



Jimmy Valiant has been spending time in Florida brawling with Kevin Sullivan.

WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

A monthly report on all the latest happenings in the world of Professional Wrestling . . .



Superstar Bill Dundee and the Mod Squad have looked very impressive lately (above). Terry Gordy, though, has been slagging and is off the championship trail (left).

in me," Kevin has said with a smile, obviously looking forward to reliving one of wrestling's most brutal feuds. . . . The **Mod Squad** has hung onto their Florida belts (See story this ish—Ed) through the challenges of the **Armstrongs** and the **Southern Boys,** but have yet to work their way up to a good shot at the World Title, still held by the **Fernandez and Rude. . . .**

In the UWF, **Mad Dog Buzz Sawyer** has returned to do some damage after a lengthy vacation from the ring. . . . **One Man Gang** continue to dodge the competition and has already begun avoiding Buzz. . . . Meanwhile, **Dark Journey** seems to be leading the brigade of fan favorites and may be a bit lost without the presence of pristine bitch **Missy Hyatt** who has moved on to the WWF. . . . **Terry Gordy** seems to have lost interest in the Universal belt and is still feuding with **Steve Williams . . .** this area needs a shot in the arm . . . look for NWA stars to begin appearing on UWF shows. . . .

And lastly, we'd like to offer a hearty "get well soon" to WME photographer **John Barrett** who suffered a heart attack this month and is out of action for the duration . . . the mat game is just too exciting for some folks. . . . Take it easy and we'll see you next month, gang, and remember: *YA GOTTA FIGHT FOR YER RIGHT TO PILEDRIVE!!!* ■

What is Rick Rude Doing to His Career?

Rick Rude is a former "World Champion," a top notch competitor who is currently outclassing his tag team partner Manny Fernandez. Despite owning one half of the NWA Tag Team Belts, Rude may be whittling away his career under the guidance of Paul Jones, notorious for dealing with mediocrity.

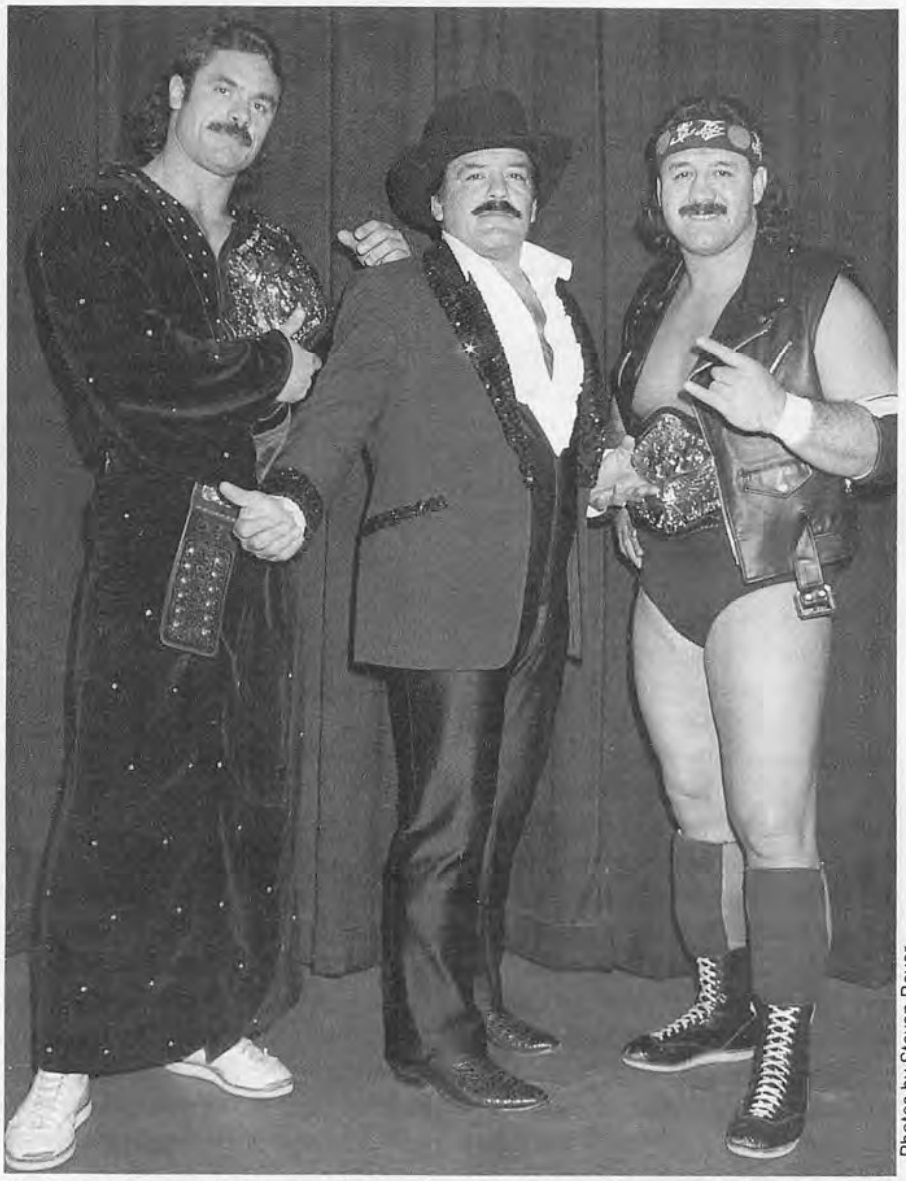
By JIM SCHUERMANN

The institution and immense popularity of Australian tag team rules has given wrestlers as many headaches and heartaches as triumphs. The efficient, friendly tag team that survives its marriage for more than a year or so is a rare thing indeed. There are certain tag teams who are close enough personally and stylistically to seem indelibly attached. The Road Warriors, for example, are metaphorically akin to those Siamese twins attached at the head in California—if those twins weighed six hundred pounds and loved to pound punies into submission. But more often tag teams are slapdash, opportunistic efforts at glory with a staggeringly high rate of divorce.

There are few teams in wrestling which appear more doomed to disband than the NWA World champions, Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez. It won't be a stunner if some raging disagreement between them short-circuits their title reign once and for all by the time this issue of *WME* hits the newsstands.

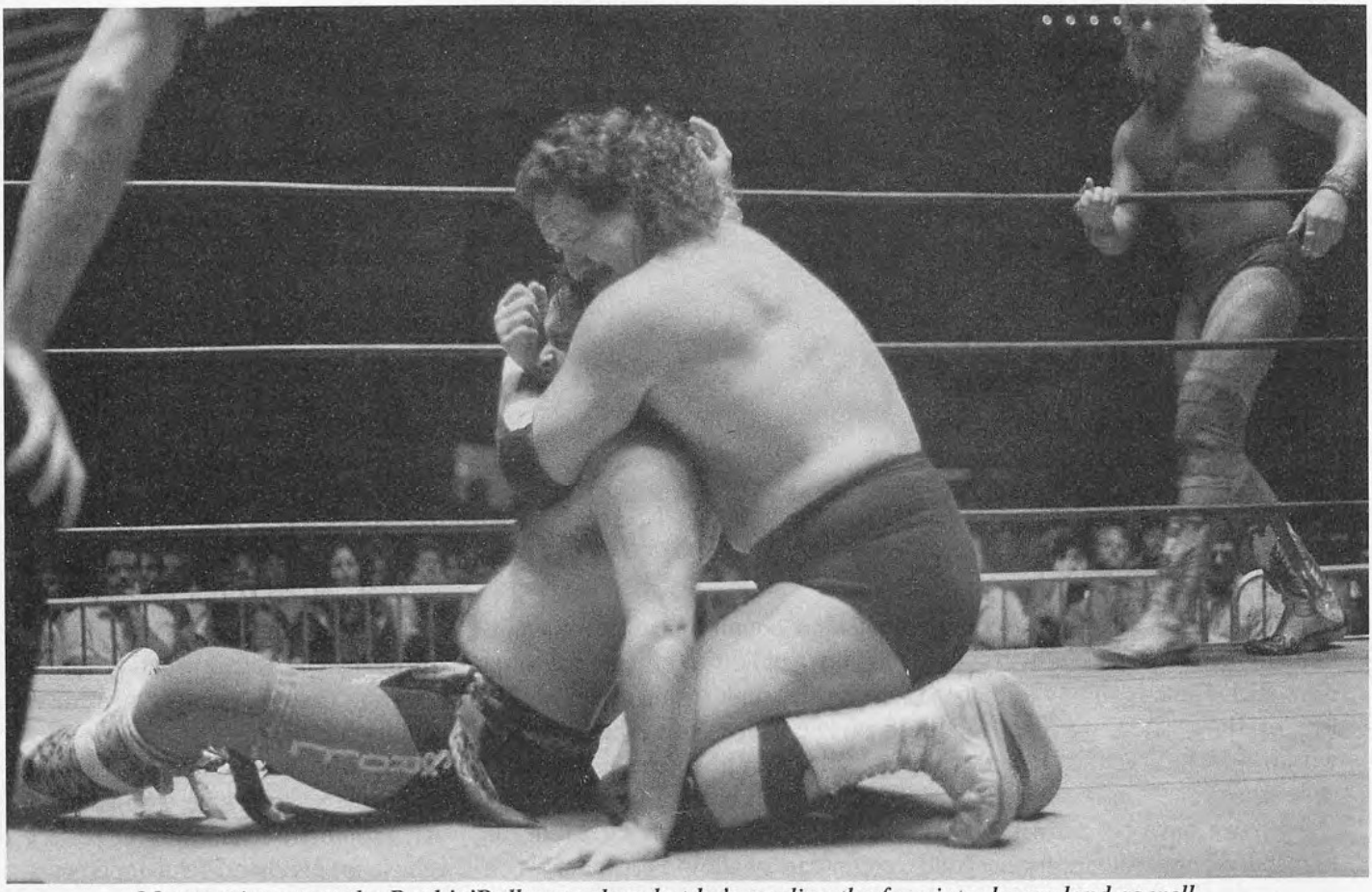
There are three potentially volatile components in this story, and all they have in common is their moustaches (are they in fact teaming to compare mat-ticklers and for no other reason?)

First we have Rick Rude. The first

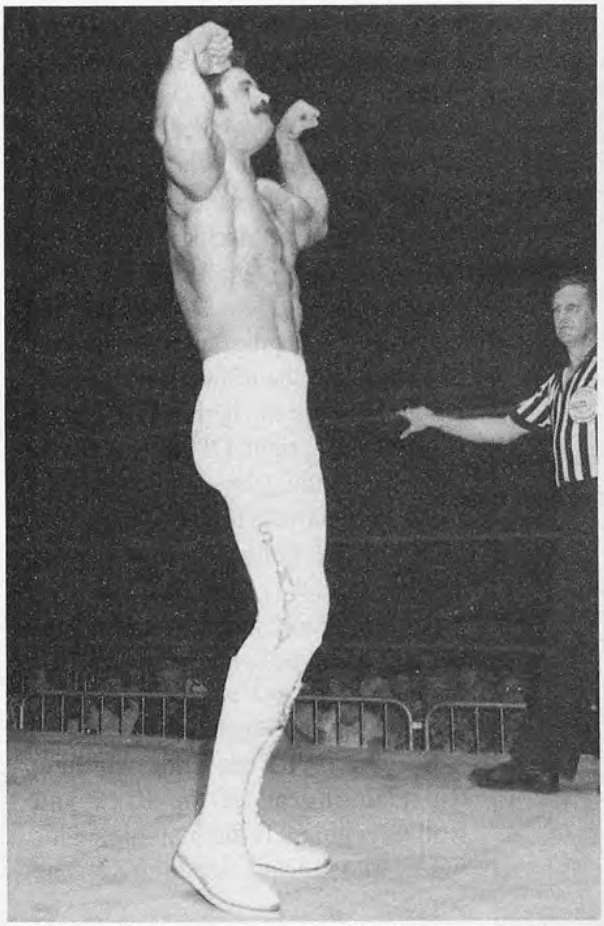


Photos by Steven Beyer

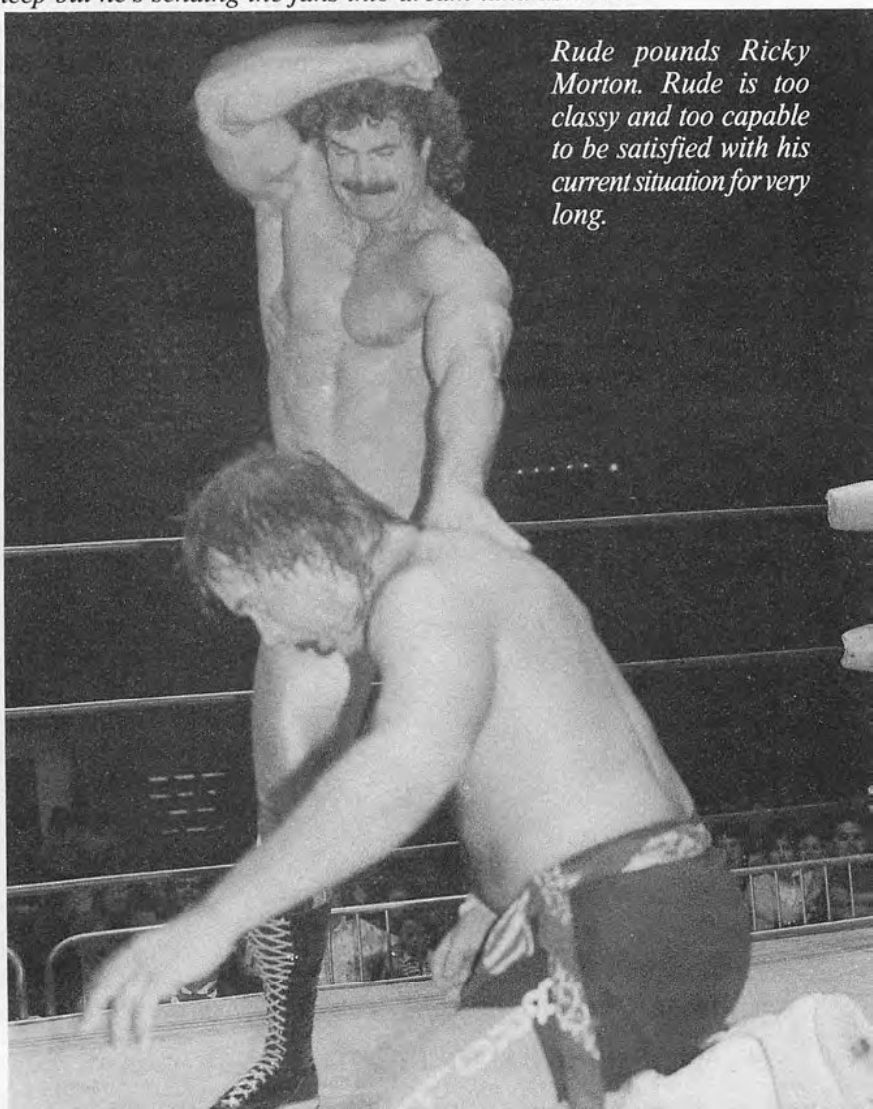
Rude and Fernandez may not be long for championship status. In fact, under the questionable guidance of Paul Jones, they may be doomed.



Manny tries to put the Rock'n'Rollers to sleep but he's sending the fans into dream-land as well.



Rick Rude is a former world champ—what's he doing with the Ragin' Bull?



Rude pounds Ricky Morton. Rude is too classy and too capable to be satisfied with his current situation for very long.

World Class World Heavyweight champion. A dominant force in whatever region he has wrestled since the early Eighties. His is a power/speed combination hitherto unseen in the ring at times. This isn't built like Schwarzenegger, and he sure as hell ain't like Rhodes; his body is sleek like a slugging center fielder's. He is, incidentally, the most physical attractive male wrestler in the squared circle today. Hugging the likes of a Hulk Hogan or Lex Lugar would bruise you; Rude is all contours, in the words of a great poet "a river of muscle flowing over bone." And his suplexes and neckbreakers describe a physical grace that makes even a fine young specimen of talent like Lugar appear to wrestle like a rhino on rollerskates by comparison. Rick Rude is simply one of the five or six greatest wrestlers in the world, and he's getting better with experience.

Then we have his partner Manny Fernandez. Dusty Rhodes' former good friend. Why does God's green earth swarm with ex-friends of Dusty Rhodes? It couldn't be his grooming and hygienic habits now could it? Yeah, the slob's sweat socks smell like Egomania IV, live in a pit bull ring.

Manny Fernandez, like his burrito-

Rick Rude should be begging Paul Jones to rip up his contract before it's too late.

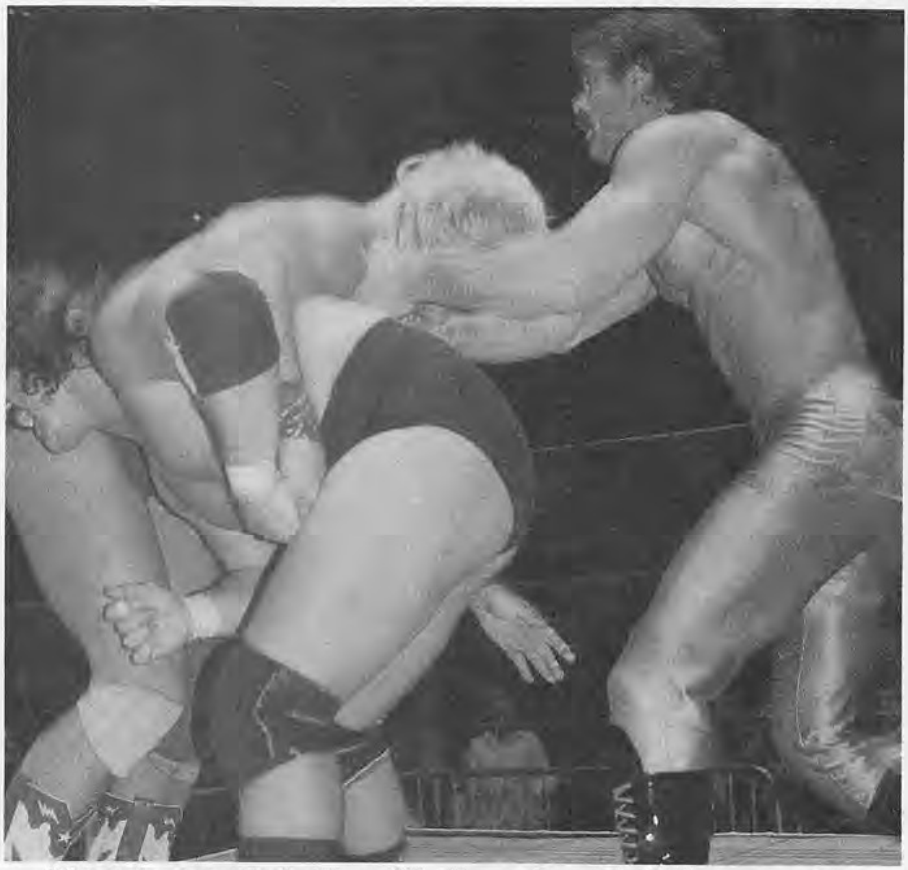
belching countryman Tito Santana, has learned how to execute the simplest vertical suplexes after years of painstaking practice. Now if he could pour wet latex over his forehead and mold a smooth polished surface he could beautify America. Only a soap-sucking cretin can swallow Fernandez' "conversion" to "rulebreaker" as anything other than a calculated move to latch on to ring genius. He did the same thing, most likely, with Dusty, who was still relatively mobile when the two of them held the NWA World tag team title a few years ago. (Although another is that they wished to go down as the most abominably scarred mutants in tag team history.)

In actuality, exploiting Rick Rude's services is the smartest thing the Tijuana Toad's ever done with his career. I mean, this is the kind of brain surgeon whom I saw nearly kill himself battling Konga the Barbarian in a "sombrero match." The point of which was the victor would get to shimmy up a ten-foot pole and retrieve, yes, a sombrero. Boy did he look pleased as punch wearing that hat, geysers of blood gushing under the brim. (I don't think anyone told him that Chavo Guerrero's old hat once came in handy during a horrible case of dysentery on a cross-country bus trip.)

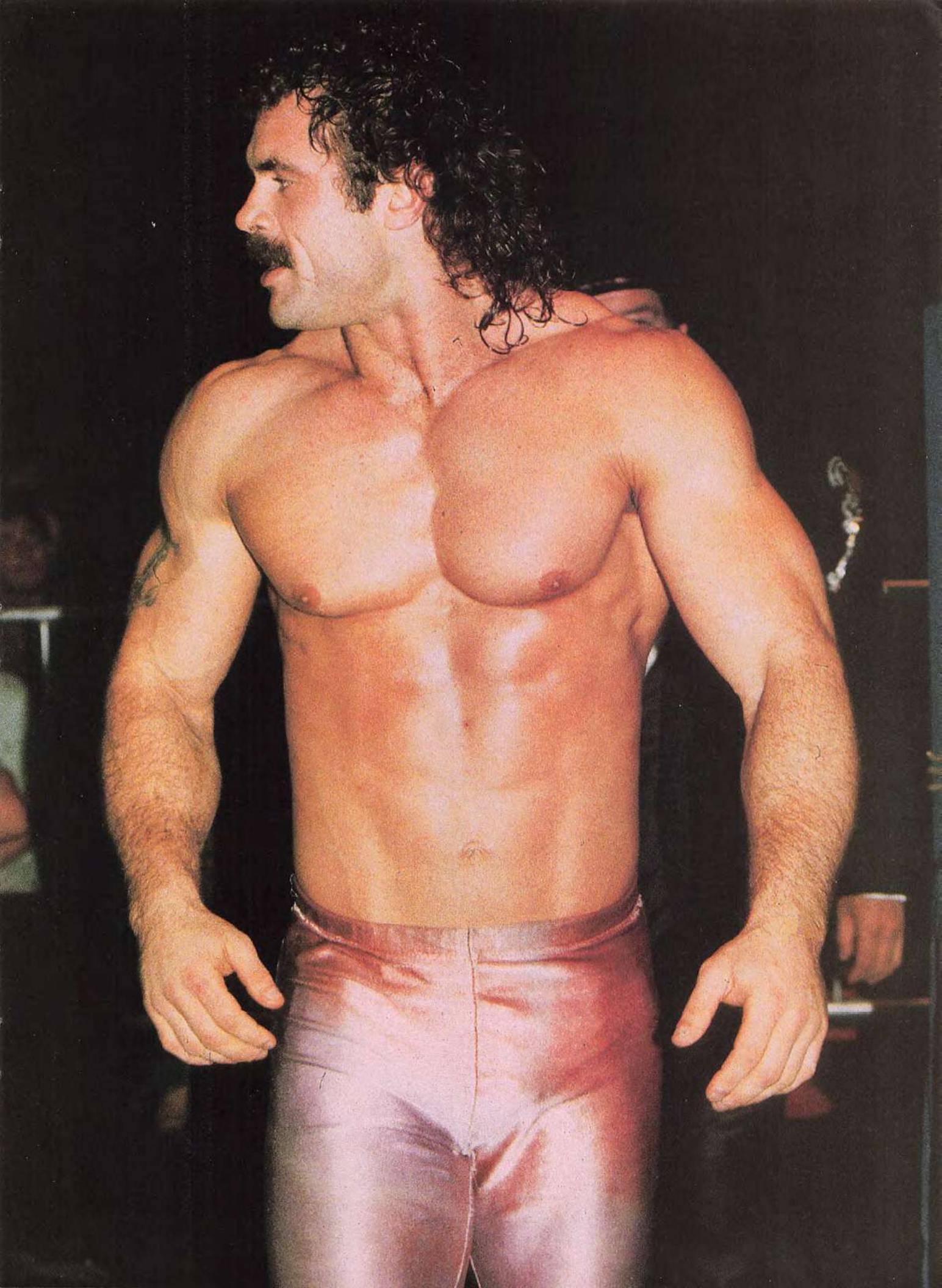
And who was Konga the Barbarian's manager at the time, who assumed that a sombrero match was the perfect vehicle for his client? Paul Jones, currently manager of Rick Rude and Manny Fernandez. I once had an abiding respect for Mr. Jones' intellect, not to mention the extraordinary wrestling skills he possessed before knee trouble short-circuited his ring career. But I wonder about a man who gets excited by the likes of Fernandez, Pex Whatley, Baron von Raschke (!), and the Assassins. He did sign Rick Rude upon Rude's entrance in the WCW area, but that was mainly because J.J. Dillon had stretched the limits of his considerable finances in signing Lex Lugar. (OOPS!!! Uh, right, Dillon's an "advisor" or something, he signs contracts in secret for nefarious financial purposes. OOPS!!! By golly, I guess I blew another "secret".) Although Jones is a reasonably good strategist and a gentleman of considerable intellect, his managerial record is largely a compendium of unmitigated disasters.

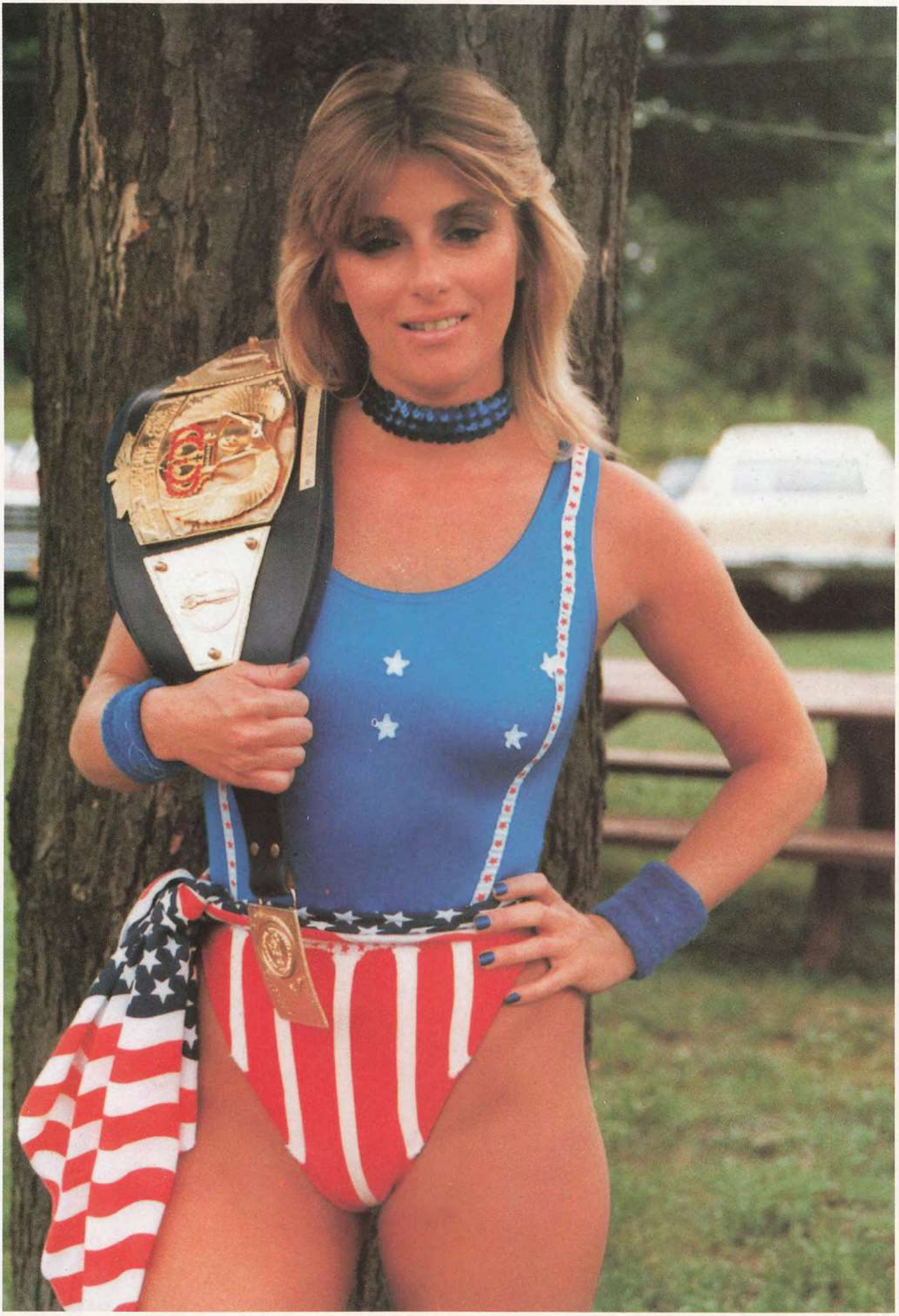
So why isn't Rick Rude wrestling Ric Flair instead of the Rock and Roll Crybabies? Is the man biding his time with tag team wrestling, or is he bored?

He is the only true champion in a championship triad. ■



Manny is no match for Barry Windham—he needs Rick to rescue him.





WRESTLER OF THE MONTH

Now We're Going to School . . .

MISTY BLUE SIMMS

Plenty Hot and Getting Hotter

Misty Blue Simms is the latest of a new breed of sexy and svelt woman wrestlers, perhaps prettier than the others but definitely every bit as tough. Holder of the IWF and NWA Women's Championships, Misty was in New York recently to discuss women's wrestling and her own wrestling camp for women.

Photos by Stephen Pfeffer

WME Editor Mike Edison pays close attention to Misty during her recent visit to New York.

WRESTLING'S MAIN EVENT has always championed women's wrestling, even when it wasn't the trend. Detailed articles on the ladies have graced these pages again and again, and always, the reader response has been terrific. Yes, some of our readers want to see "more revealing" pix of wrestling's sexiest females, but the majority of the fans just want to see more down to earth grappling. The reason promoters choose to keep the women on the bottom of the care remains a mystery to wrestling fans who know that the women can mix it up with as much brutality and science as the men. And while women wrestlers tend to have a lower profile on TV and in the press, every so often an athlete comes along who changes that—at least for a little while. Misty Blue is such an athlete.

Misty Blue is hot right now, as hot as any woman wrestler ever was, and without clinging to flash in the pan pop stars, either. What she has accomp-

lished was through hard work, not just hype. The promoters have taken to her because she is such a hard worker and the fans because of her disarming good looks and ring ability. Unlike Wendi Richter, Misty made it to the top without the WWF machine, and unlike Wendi, she is a true champion, defending both of her titles night after night.

"I'm ready to wrestle Wendi. I'd be happy to put up my championship," Misty told me. "Does she even have a belt now or does Moolah have it back? Neither of them seem very active anymore. Moolah should retire that belt and let someone defend it for a change. I'm ready to add it to my collection." Misty speaks with confidence and very well she should. She has pinned everyone she has tangled with and not only hung onto her straps, but worked her way into the spotlight. She's more than just hot, she's trendy.

"I hope it's not just a trend. . . . I'm really trying to do a lot for women's wrestling. . . . I'm out there defending my titles every night against the toughest wrestlers in the world and if I look good doing it, then fine. The fans are loving it and hopefully, the promoters

Wrestling's sexiest champ.

are trying to catch on. I'm trying to give something back to the sport."

That's the kind of attitude that makes Misty so special, and the kind of attitude that led her to create her own wrestling camp for women.

"This is serious business," Misty said. "I was trained by Killer Kowalski and he's got to be the toughest man alive. I owe him a lot. I learned everything right there at his wrestling school, but mostly how to be tough, how to be a winner. And he was straight up with me: as soon as I was ready he got me some matches . . . and now look where I am—people are calling me because they want a champion. Now it's time for me to give some of it back. Before I hooked up with Killer I had a hard time. There was no one willing to train me; it was nearly impossible to become a wrestler. That's why I've decided to open up my camp."

Misty's wrestling camp for women will run in two sessions this summer near her home in upstate New York, but she is quick to remind anyone who is interested in attending her camp that "this is serious business and DEFINITELY NOT for women concerned with meeting popular male wrestlers." Any women interested can write to Misty at PO Box 1079, S. Glen Falls, NY, 12801 for more information.

With Misty Blue leading the campaign to bring women's wrestling the attention it deserves, who better an instructor to introduce young talent into the folds of professional wrestling? This is definitely a once in a life-time opportunity for those of the fairer sex who would be warriors. ■

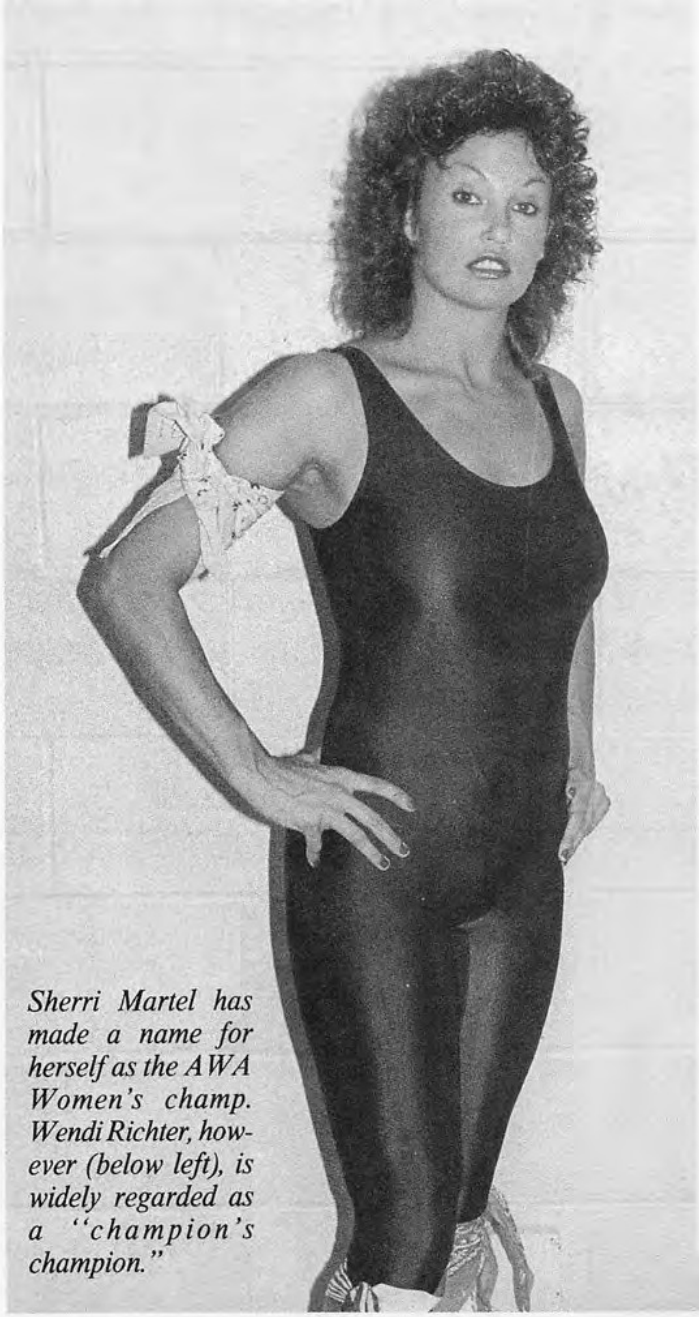
WOMEN'S WRESTLING: THE CONTENDERS

While Misty Blue may be bringing new publicity and glamour to women's wrestling, she would be nowhere without her competition. There is no shortage of women eager to take on Misty and muscle their way into the spotlight.

Wendi Richter and the Fabulous Moolah seem to share the No. 1 position in the women's wrestling world, but Moolah is flirting with semi-retirement and Wendi rarely defends the championship she claims. But behind them are the likes of Debbie Combs, well respected for her power and viciousness; AWA Women's champ Sherri Martel who is both scientific and a shrew; Lelani Kai, who once bested Wendi Richter for her WWF

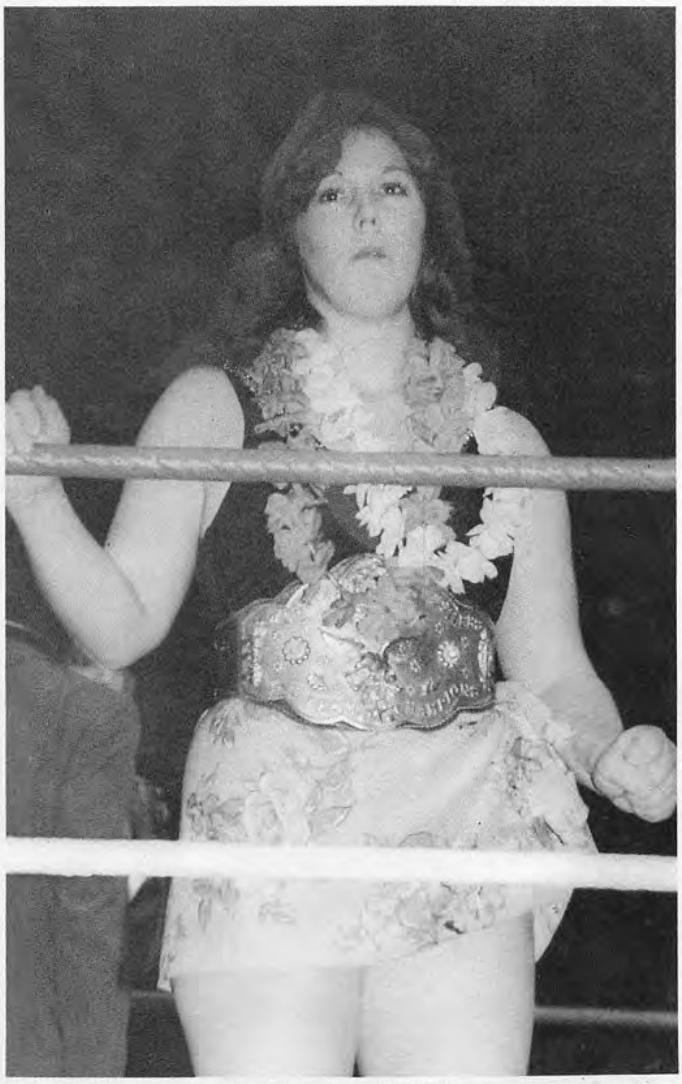
The women are every bit as vicious as the men and WME is proud to give them the attention they deserve.

Photos by Bob Castelli



Sherri Martel has made a name for herself as the AWA Women's champ. Wendi Richter, however (below left), is widely regarded as a "champion's champion."

Lelani Kai once held Richter's WWF strap but surrendered it at WrestleMania II.



Debbie Combs has been known to flaunt a strap herself: she is another veteran worth watching.

strap; and the ever-troublesome combo of Lock and Luna, either of who could be deadly on any given night.

The most recent entry into the women's wrestling world is the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling show, and that is exactly what it is, a show. The GLOW presentation is nearly void of high quality wrestling and is exploitative of women. It only figures that the show is taped in Las Vegas.

Misty Blue is on a roll right now, quickly becoming a regular media darling as she continues to defend her championship. Hopefully, she'll prove to be the saviour of women's wrestling, bringing it back into the spotlight where it belongs.

■MONICA LISBEN

RIC FLAIR'S IMPOSSIBLE NIGHTMARE:

Hulk Hogan, Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo Psyche Him Out

Even the best can be shaken. What started out as a joke, a running jab-fest at Hulk Hogan, has turned into an obsession for Ric Flair, who wants to prove to the world—the entire world—that he is simply, the best. THE World Champion. And with Hogan on the brain and Barry Windham at ringside, Flair found himself psyched out for a routine match with Mike Rotundo.

Rotundo's title reign only lasted a few moments before the referee reversed the descision.

Photos by Bill Otten

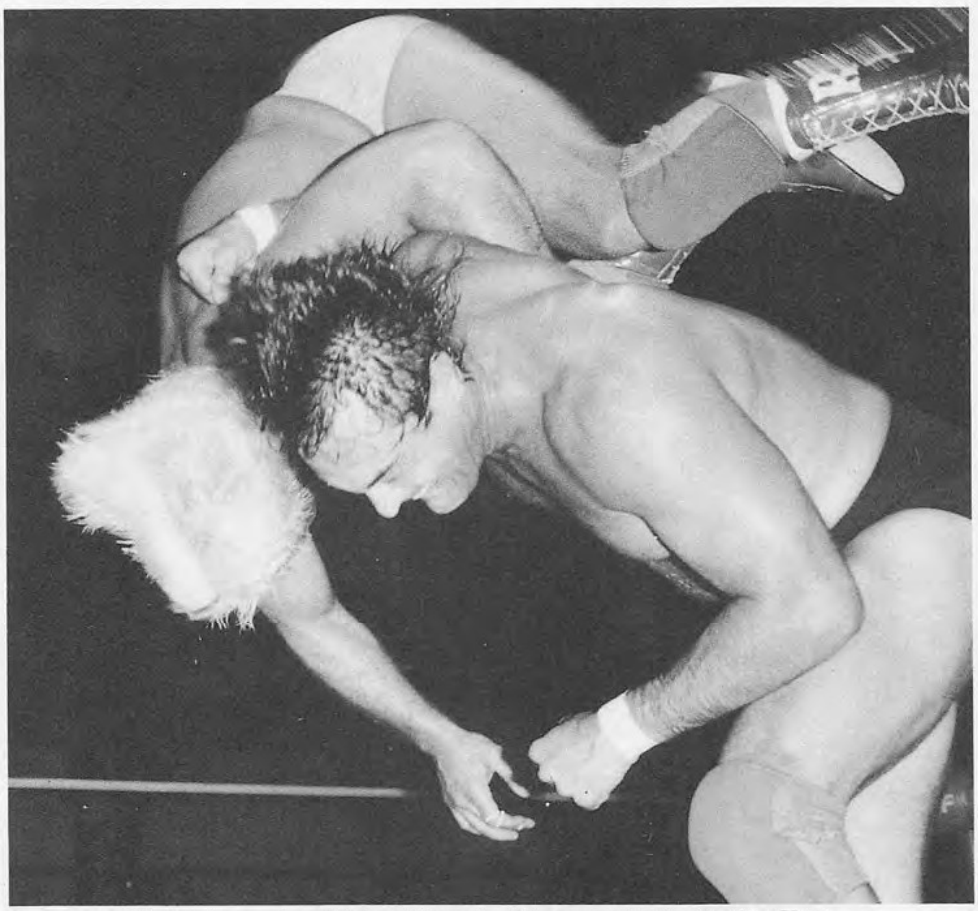
Mike took advantage of Flair who was psyched-out before the match began.

By DIGGER MOLLOY

Some men strive to attain nothing at all. They wind up lucky in a middle-class job with connections, or they wind up peddling their palms in front of train stations. Some strive to attain respectability with reasonable aspirations. A mortgage, love, maybe kids and a VCR, but definitely a car. Those with mediocre ambitious usually make it, dying with a smile of contented curiosity.

Others rev up the blast furnaces of their ambitions. I wanna be best or nothin' at all. Anything less is nothing. These men and women generally descend to suicidal self-loathing, the unhappy and unreal product of fantasies murderous to themselves. For if you are the very best at something, you measure up to a severely select illusion. For there is no such thing as the unqestioned pinnacle of human achievement in any endeavor. There is usually doubt, and always politics—office politics in a mob o' work, emotional politics in a #1 True Love, and the politics of public acceptance in any

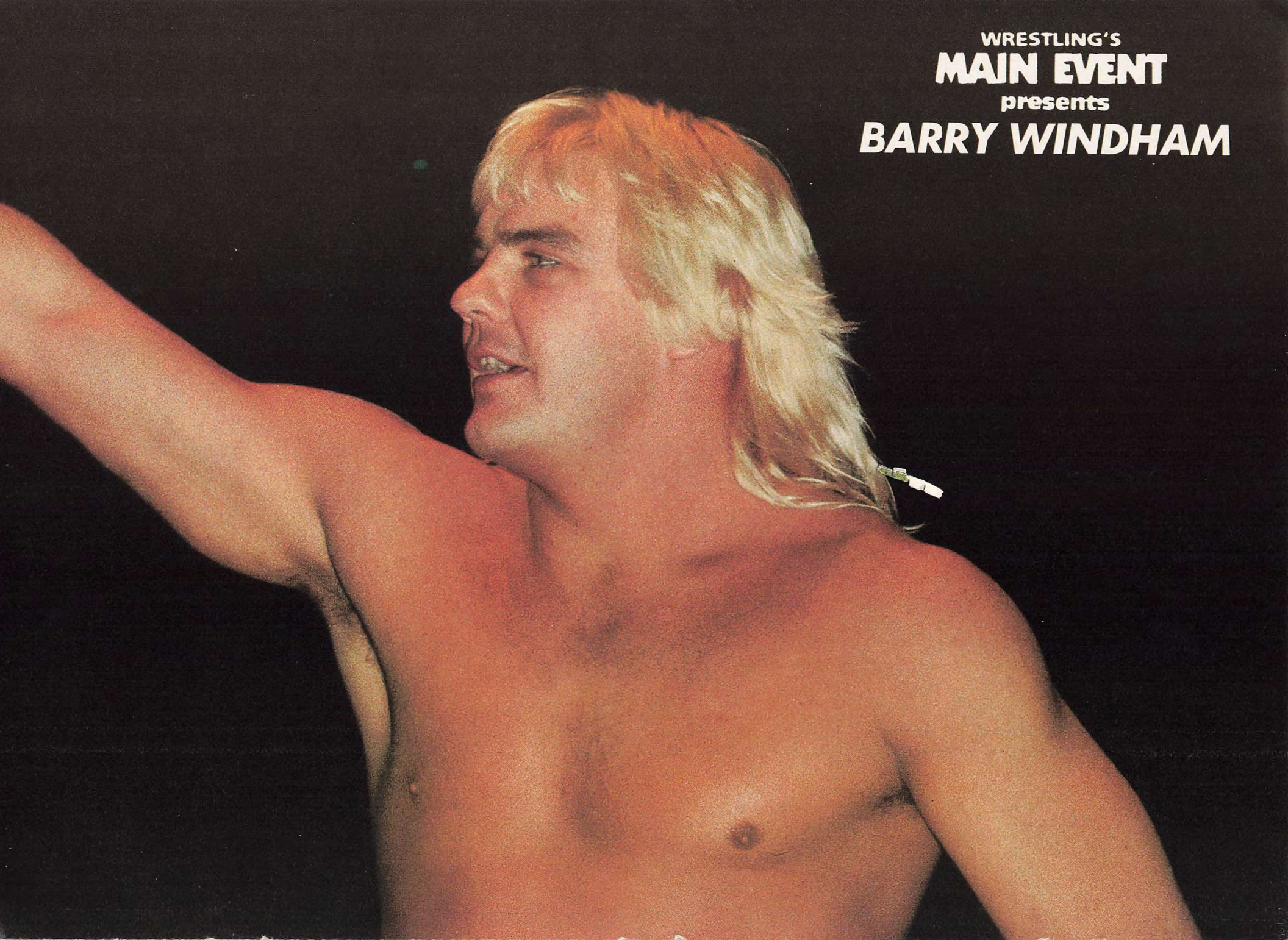
Flair has Rotundo locked into his Figure Four. It took a lot of guts to escape.



Rotundo catches Flair off gurd with an enthusiastic Hip Toss.

celebrated public effort. Zen Buddhism to the contrary, there is no such thing as a Perfect Master in this existence. Doubt rules from within and without; the Rosebud sled must always come to ash.

Ric Flair is as assuredly at the pinnacle of his profession as Alexander the Great commanded the Western world at the height of his conquests. He got there by incinerating his soul, but making himself as blind as the Zen archer of smug antiquity. His gifts were unquestionably superior to all but a dozen or so wrestlers when he debuted professionally. If Bob Orton Jr. could pin Ric Flair in 1974 and lose to Paul Roma in 1987, this does not at all reflect inferior skills or savvy. Why Flair and Orton have not reversed each other's fates, why Orton is not NWA World champion and Flair a sadly diminishing WWF semi-main eventer, I haven't the slightest idea. These are not questions for sportswriters. To the agnostic or the pragmatist, this is a matter of entropy, the delicate


WRESTLING'S
MAIN EVENT
presents
BARRY WINDHAM

force and balance of spontaneous change. To the religious, I suppose it would be otherwise, but there are plenty of atheists in the foxholes of the squared circle.

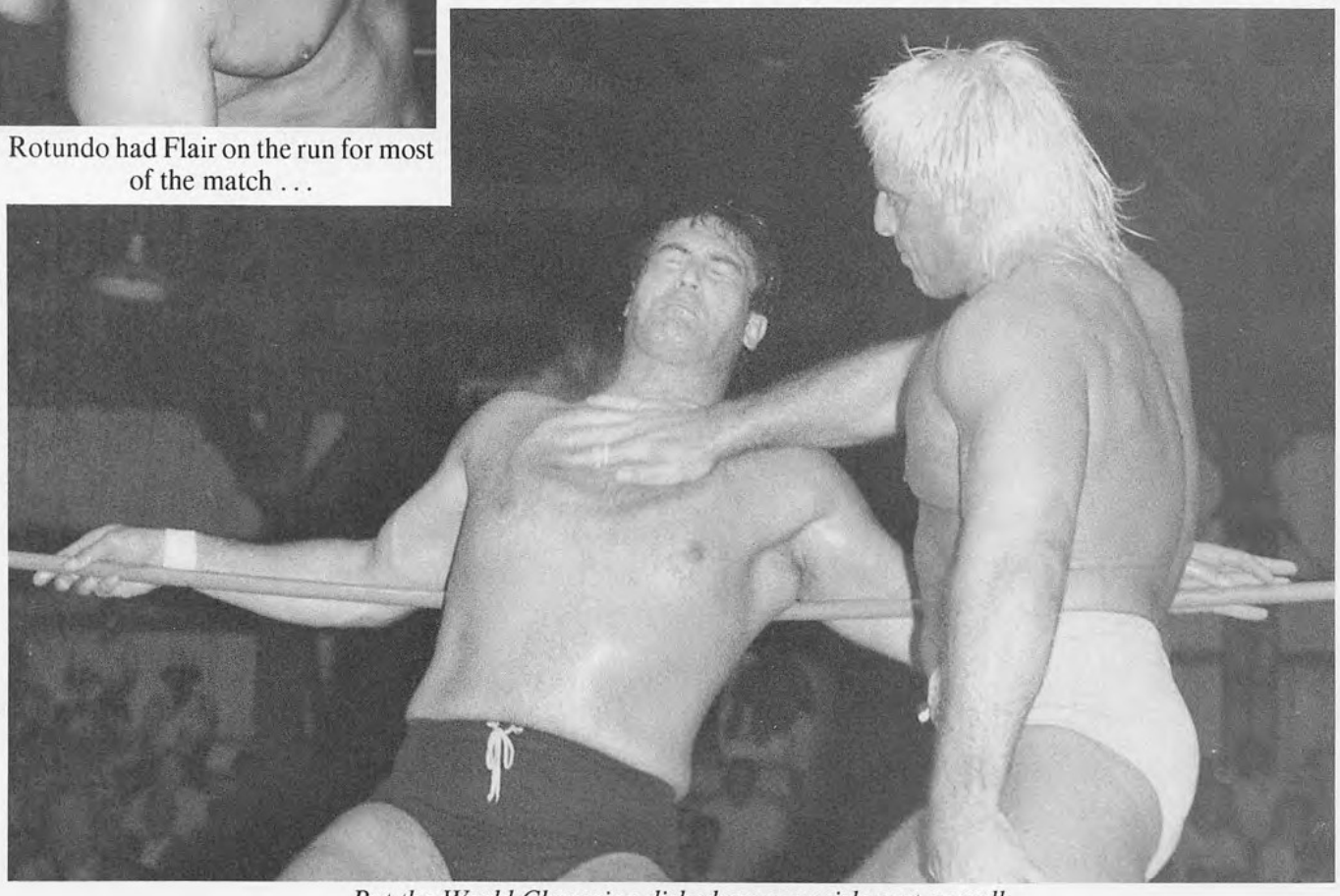
Ric Flair's pinnacle is certainly defeated by politics. Unfortunately the

Rotundo had Flair on the run for most of the match . . .

Flair was nearly thrown from Space Mountain. Only his rule-bending ways saved him.

office (promotional) politics exist primarily in his own mind. But scapegoating is difficult here, as we try to discern why in hell Mike Rotondo could pin Ric Flair.

Supporters of Flair claim that he merely tossed Rotundo out of the the ring to get the match over with and get down to brawling without titles on the line, and it backfired when Rotundo fought back. This makes Nature Boy (a) a cheater who specializes in flog-



But the World Champion dished some punishment as well.

ging the archaic NWA rule against tossing opponents over the top rope (which is unfortunately true), or (b) a scared bunny rabbit momentarily incapacitated by a guy who wrestles like a paunchy dock foreman (mind you, I know Rotundo's in great shape and he isn't paunchy, but his lack of speed and mobility make Big Fat Rusty Dusty look like Mil Mascaras.)

Others, who are among Flair's supporters, alledge that he was distracted by the presence of Barry Windham. They feel that the Emperor of Space Mountain was in effect psychologically double-teamed by Windham's presence at ringside. "Ric's carrying on too many battles with too many sissy boys," Paul Jones told me, clucking his tongue and running a thumbnail across his moustache.

The fact of the matter is that Barry Windham *did* destroy Ric Flair, if inadvertently.

"Hey man," Barry Windham said in the dressing room corridor to Ric Flair, minutes before the match with Rotundo. "Don't even think about Hulk Hogan. You're the true champion, and this match is gonna be wrestling the way it oughta be."

The tall cowboy with the rapidly expanding Mulligan brewgut and the crooked DeNiro grin clapped Flair on the shoulder and strutted off to shower. Flair fumed. He paced back and forth, nearly upsetting a TV camera crew interviewing J.J. Dillon. "Watch it, buddy," barked the bulldyke with the boom mike who couldn't care less about wrestling. Flair, the consummate tactician and master of ring agility, tripped full-fledged over the wires. He didn't seem to notice either this or the insult.

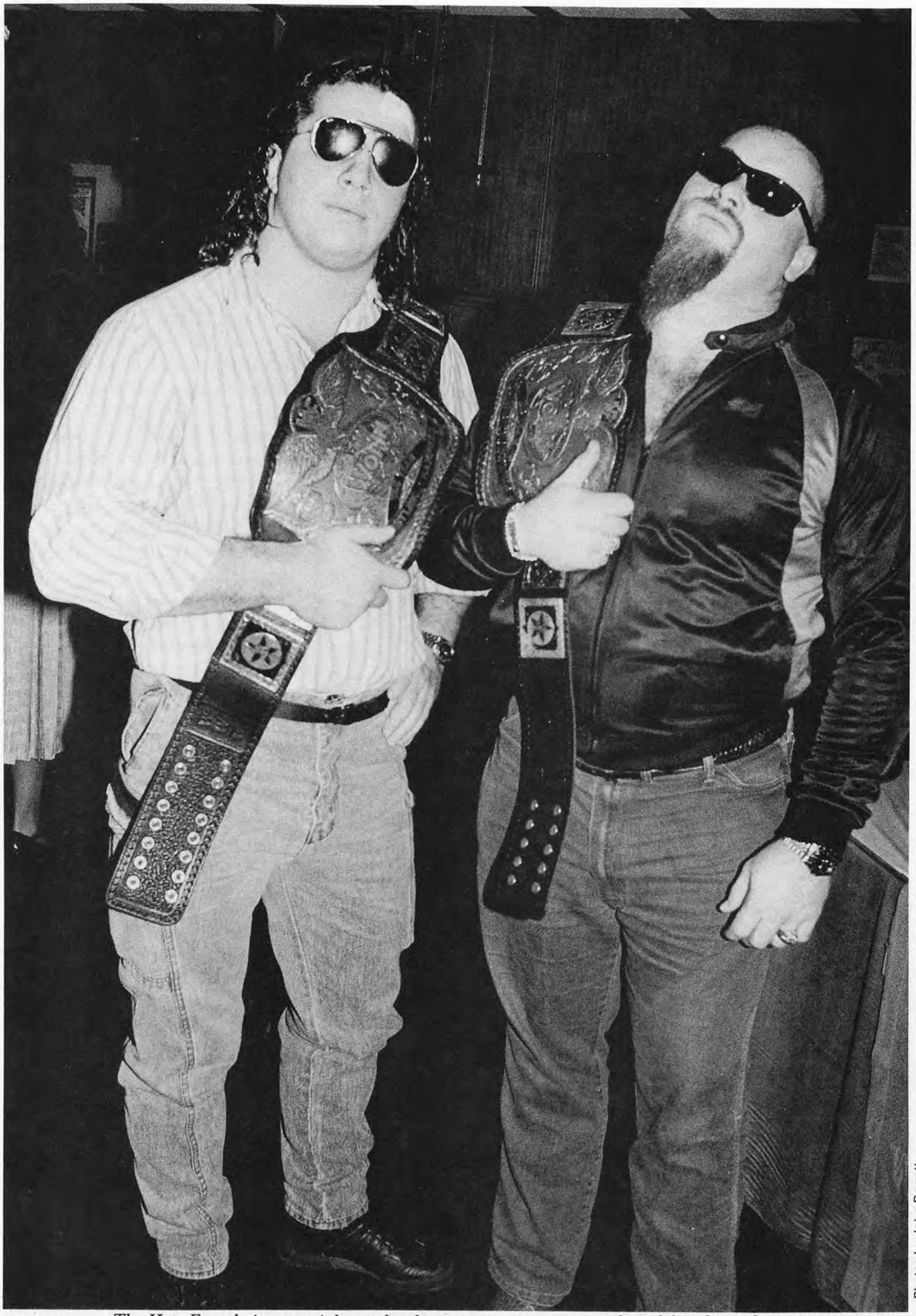
"Hogan. Hogan. Hogan." This is what Ric Flair, man atop the world, kept repeating like an obsessive neurotic as he paced back and forth.

It is now well known that the mere mention of Hogan's name will send Ric Flair into a frenzy, which either results in brooding or dark violence. Hogan is the man the neophytes recognize as World Champion, and the hell of it is HE IS. Could a clown like Mike Rotundo get out from behind the sausage roll vendors' cart and challenge Hogan for the title in the WWF? He could barely get arrested with Danny Spivey after Windham, a far superior wrestler, left the Federation. Rotundo wisely followed. The best wrestlers there besides Flair are Horsemen Tully Blanchard and Lex Lugar, and co-Tag Team champ Rick Rude—none of whom are feasible challengers for reasons of friendship or divergent careers.

Unless Ric Flair wrestles Hulk Hogan before one of them reaches Valhalla, Ric Flair will never relive his ultimate moment of greatness. These two will wrestle when Reagan and Gorbachev don garter belts and panties at the arms control talks. And the terrible thing is that Hogan is too stupid to realize what his championship is all about, while Flair is perhaps overly conscious of his place in history. He is in fact allowing a bestial tanned ghost of an icon to distract from the matter of winning.

For Ric Flair wrestled Rotundo, strategically, as if his skimpy bones were Hogan's. True, all wrestlers smell alike, but that's no excuse for a professional like Flair to let his obsessions get the best of him. ■

Bloody but happy, with his ten pounds of gold.



Photos by John Barrett

The Hart Foundation certainly exudes the arrogance necessary to be rulebreaking champs.

THE HART FOUNDATION

Are They Underrated or Are They Bums?

Are the Harts true champions or just a couple of heels who got away with cheating? Can they really wrestle or are they just tough guys? One thing's for sure: with Jimmy Hart at the helm they are definitely dangerous. The Mouth of the South is going to make sure they don't hand over the belts.

By SCOTT ZASKE-BENDINE

The level of talent distribution in professional wrestling has not drastically changed over the past year. Superstars have remained superstars, stars are for the most part stars of similar magnitude, scrubs haven't burst through mediocrity to top of the ratings. There are exceptions, of course: Savannah Jack, Bad News Allan, Sting, The Mod Squad, and the Honky Tonk Man should be "forces to be reckoned with in the weeks to come" (in the TV broadcasters' parlance). The rejuvenation of Jimmy Snuka is also comforting to his legion of fans, although he is pretty well through with the Big Three promoters.

But the biggest upset of recent months has got to be the Hart Foundation's victory over the British Bulldogs for the hotly contested WWF tag team title. An even bigger upset is their tenacity in retaining the title. A year ago, Bret Hart and Jim Neidhart were being outclassed in time-limit draws with the Killer Bees. Today, they are firmly entrenched on the championship precipice—that may sound like a contradiction in terms, but all champions rent their laurels night-to-night. They are not teetering on the edge of the precipice, like One Man Gang. They're looking good.

Those cheating Harts keep on pounding.

Of course, the critics charge that as the Harts won via blatant rulebreaking, they cheat their way through the title reign. It is indeed the presence of deposed referee Danny Davis in an advisory capacity which riles not only the true blue fans of fan favorites and other wrestlers but the top brass of the WWF as well. "I've seen a lot of scummy tag teams over the years," no less a kingpin that Arnold Skoaland has been heard to growl, "but this Hart Foundation takes the cake." "We are not at all pleased with the Hart Foundation's success, but there is nothing we can do about them or about Davis," says WWF "President" Jack Tunney.

"Legally, we cannot prevent the state athletic commissions' granting him a wrestling license without due cause for review. Even if we had due cause, the hearings could take years. It is considerably easier to discipline or ban a corrupt referee than an unsavory competitor." The very existence of Danny Davis rubs the WWF Championship Committee's collective nose in the dung.

Reputations aside, are the Hart Foundation for real? We contacted the Postscientific Institute for their special brand of expertise and analysis. The PSI is, as *WME* readers may know, is a privately financed "think tank" dedicated to the study and improvement of professional wrestling. This dedicated band of hard-working professionals forwarded a white paper entitled, "The Hart Foundation: Mastery or Myth?". For a modest fee, the finest minds in wrestling research gave us the following assessments:

Neidhart's training with anvils has prpared him for the ring-wars.

● "Bret Hart is conceivably the finest wrestler in WWF tag team wrestling. He has an incredibly diverse repertoire of holds, which makes it exceedingly difficult for opponents to anticipate his maneuvers. Rick Martel and the Dynamite Kid are superior wrestlers at their peak, but both are hampered by injuries—back and knee trouble, respectively, which aside from brain damage are the worst a wrestler can suffer. Mr. Hart is in the peak of physical condition, and maintains a distinct strength advantage in one-on-one matchups with both the aforementioned individuals.

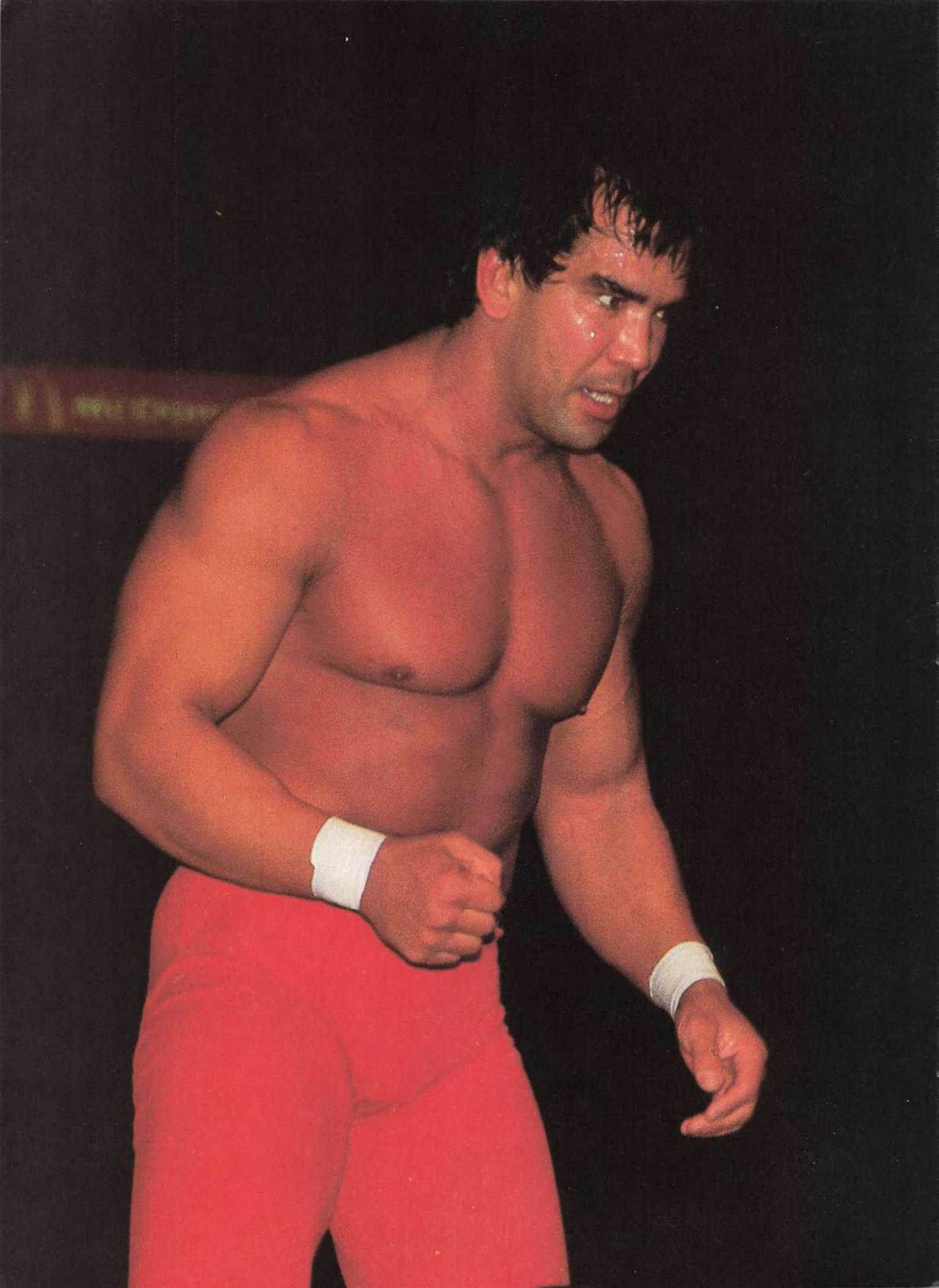
Bret Hart may be the WWF's most capable tag team wrestler.

● "Jim Neidhart is a living example of the inadequacies of wrestlers' training regimes. This unprepossessing, thick and rather paunchy fellow could quite confidently defeat Billy Jack Haynes, Paul Orndorff, and perhaps even Hercules Hernandez in tests of power leverage. Leverage is of course the key to most wrestling moves which require brute force, and Mr. Neidhart's work with the discus, shot put, and anvil throw are much more relevant to ring combat than conventional weight training.

● "Jimmy Hart is one of the supreme strategists of wrestling, admittedly obnoxious personality notwithstanding. There are few managers who can motivate a wrestler as he can and has, from Adrian Adonis to Andy Kaufman. His development of the double DDT for the Hart Foundation not only won his charges the WWF tag team championship, it revolutionized wrestling with a move diabolical in its simplicity and impact. This man cannot be underestimated—his success, of course, is self-explanatory."

The Postscientific Institute is too modest (and secretive) to reveal that the double DDT, like the figure-four leglock, German suplex, and countless other maneuvers, was "developed" in one of their very own laboratories. It is rumored in fact that Jimmy Hart worked there in the early 1970's, during the hiatus between his career as a rock musician and his re-emergence as a wrestling manager. This, like so many other PSI rumors, cannot be confirmed.

This rumor can be confirmed, however; Danny Davis has been seen on two separate occasions in the small town directly adjacent to the Postscientific Institute's secret rural locale. There were no matches scheduled there at any time, nor anywhere within a hundred-mile radius. When *WME* called Davis to ask him about these reports, his reply was typically succinct: "NO BUDDY." With an addendum before slamming down the phone, spat out in his angry-Bobby Kennedy voice; "STAHP TAILIN' ME, YOU LITTLE #!!@?@!!" ■



MATCH OF THE MONTH

SAVAGE AND STEAMBOAT:

A RULEBREAKER'S ROMANCE

Who says wrestling isn't romantic? Blood and sweat and fury inside a cage may represent a different kind of lust, but the arena has always been a classic venue for a date. WRESTLING'S MAIN EVENT is proud to present this, the first ever wrestling romance.

By JIM SCHEURMANN

It was gonna be a ripper of a night. Dale showered twice and slapped Old Spice all over his neck, armpits, and sternum when he was through. He brushed his moderately long blonde hair in the mirror languidly, like a femme fatale in a movie. He allowed himself a measure of narcissism when he gazed at the natural froth of his roots.

Photos by John Barrett

Randy Savage and Rick Steamboat in the cage: real fun date.

Dale had met Pamela five years previous, in that hellhole of a Northeastern dorm. Thirty-eight stories in the middle of a quaint ethnic neighborhood. He loved her silently then because she was unpretentious and pretty, and because she bore no shame at staying up till six in the morning with classes at seven-thirty. She was attached, and lived with the guy later. Not a chance.

Stuck with an extra ticket to the wrestling matches, Dale hedged all of his sure bets (male friends whom he was sick of whom got off on Hacksaw Duggan and loved ice hockey) to beg for a female date. Pamela was the only woman he had ever met who enjoyed grappling as much as he did. More importantly, she pasted a sticker of the Iron Sheik over the name of her personalized coffee mug. Not the type of gal to squeal over Ricky Stembait's buns in a cage match.

So Dale picked up the receiver and turned the wheel with his finger and she answered and talked about how she was living with her parents. No boyfriends, clear interest, conversation. The date was made, and Dale took the effort to clean his body and borrow a car.

Savage goes for the door but Steamboat is hanging on . . .

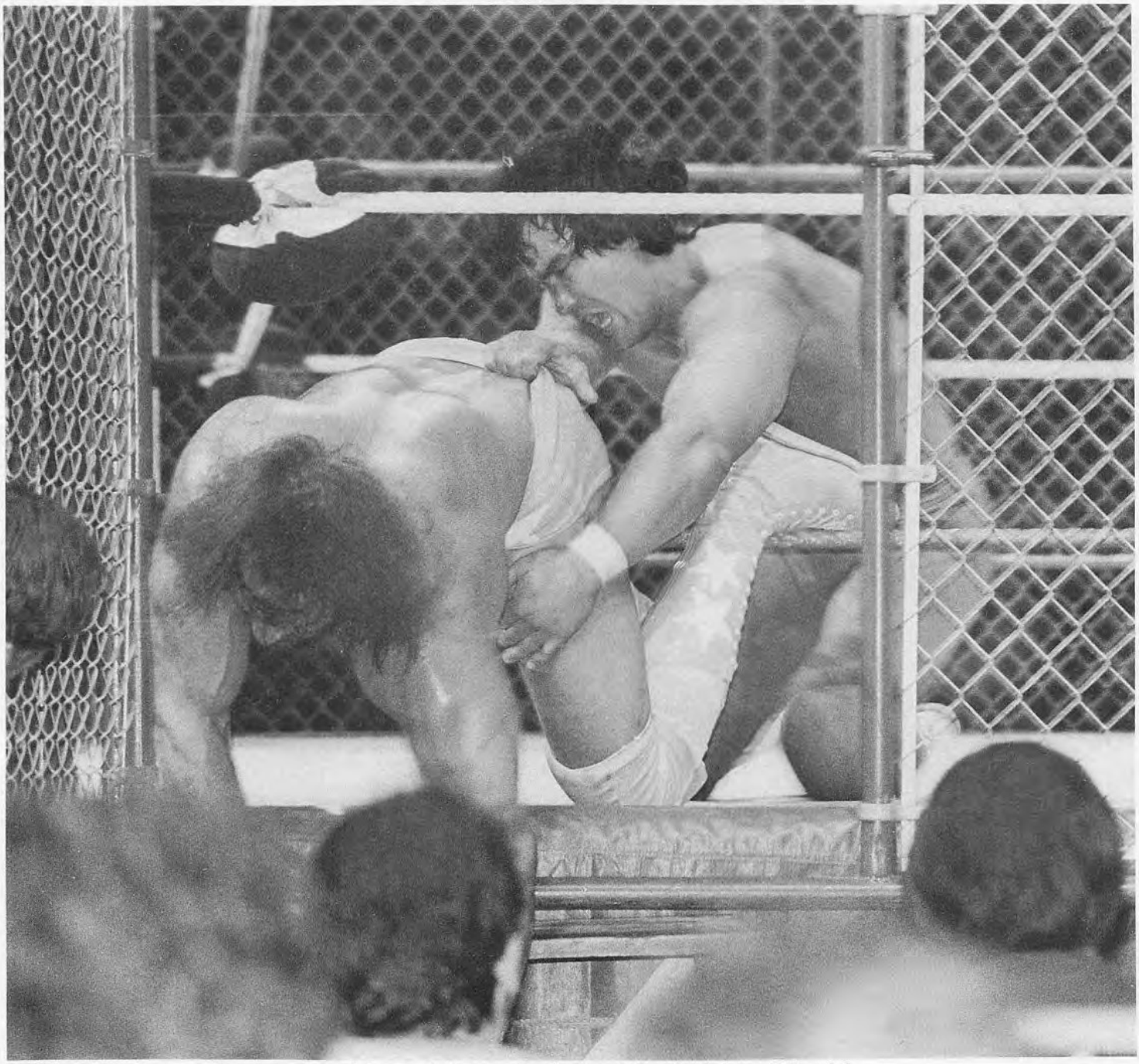
They took their seats at third row ringside, close enough for the blood to spatter on Pamela's skirt if the blood happened to flow. And Pamela was cool, she'd love it, she wouldn't mind at all. She had said she was hoping for blood over dinner at Beefsteak Charlie's. My kind of woman, Dale thought appreciatively, oggling and fantasizing.

The card proceeded with blinding, deliberate speed, as most shows on the WWF traveling carny will. Killer Khan beat up on Jim Powers, and the Honky Tonk Man got booed, and Outback Jack worked the next-to-last bathroom run match. The card was too short for an intermission. Dale's mind was two-/sevenths attracted to the ring action and the rest was attracted to the waves flowing between him and Pamela when their knees touched. Which was continuously. And it's easy to get close sitting next to somebody on folding chairs.

. . . ringside, close enough for the blood to spatter on Pamela . . .

Outback Jack grabbed the ring mike, and barked something unintelligible about emu eggs. Dale snuck a kiss. Pamela's lips unglued after a second.

The timekeeper rang the bell for attention. The ring announcer, uncom-



. . . and keeps their romance happening at least for a little while.

fortably hot in a rented powder blue tux, wiped Outback Jack's spittle off the microphone and cleared his throat.

"THE MAIN EVENT . . ."

Dale and Pamela parted and looked towards the ring. Steamboat was already there, hopping up and down like Captain Cupcake on a chocolate-covered lily pad. He waved to the crowd and gave them a double thumbs-up.

"What a jerk!" said Pamela, with genuine distaste.

"I couldn't agree more," said Dale.

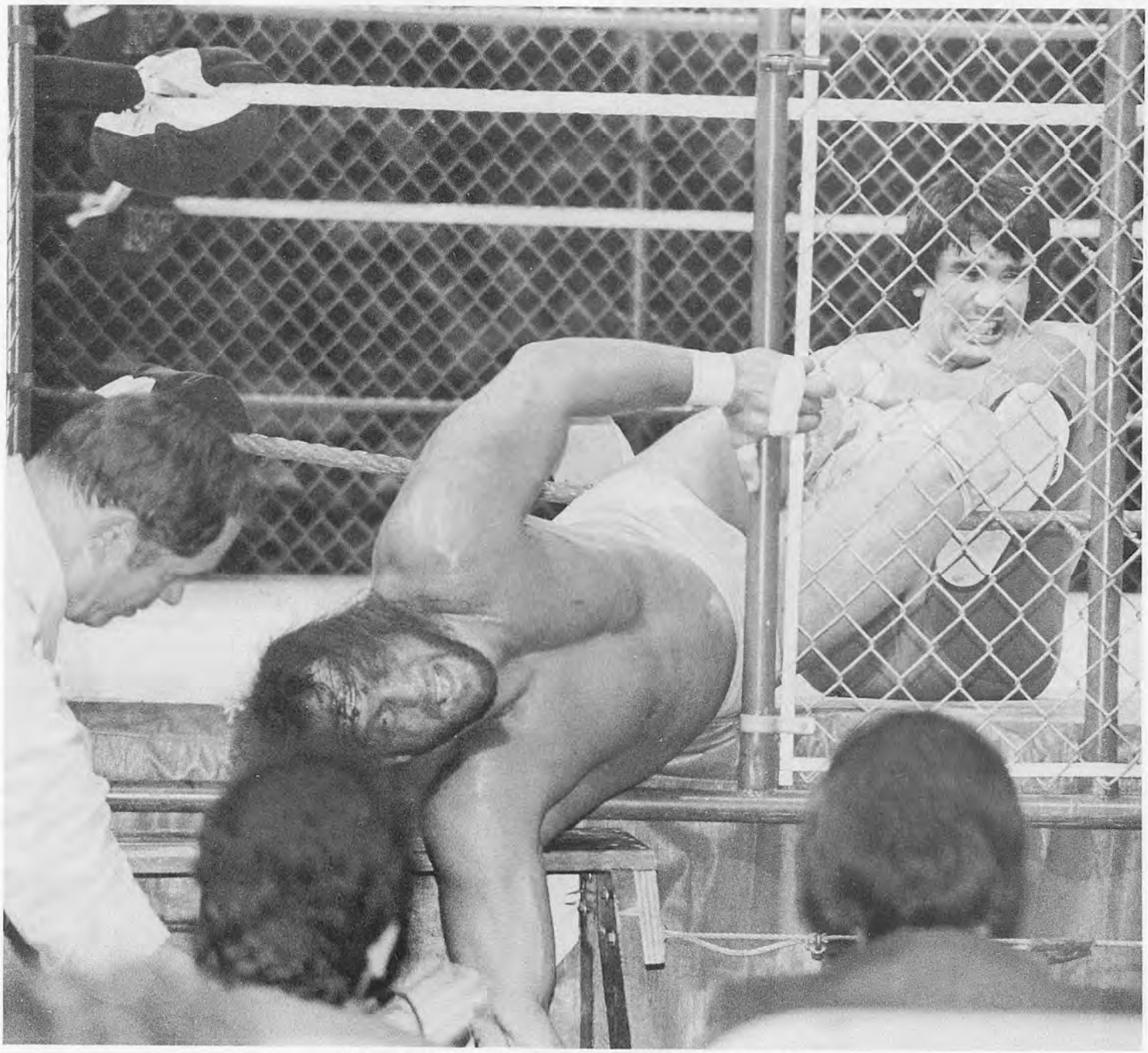
After a considerable delay—unusual for a challenger—Randy Savage stomped down the aisle in front of manager-wife Elizabeth. She trailed behind like a lap dog looking fora lap to hide in. If Elizabeth had been timorous when Savage was champion, she now rushed through the ring ropes with the same enthusiasm that Armenian nationals once rushed to line up for the Turkish firing squads.

"Randy Savage is still the champion in my book," Pamela purred.

Dale thought again about the way she said it, and there was no question. She didn't tell, she purred. She liked Macho Boy as much as the Iron Sheik.

In the immortal words of Norman Mailer, "Hot Dog!!!"

Randy Savage's veins bulged from his neck and he turned a color past red, infra-red, like the color of the baby



Savage desperately tries to get out of this relationship.

ferret cages in the Children's Zoo. Maybe he was getting ready for his own cage match by pretending he was an animal. Pretending?

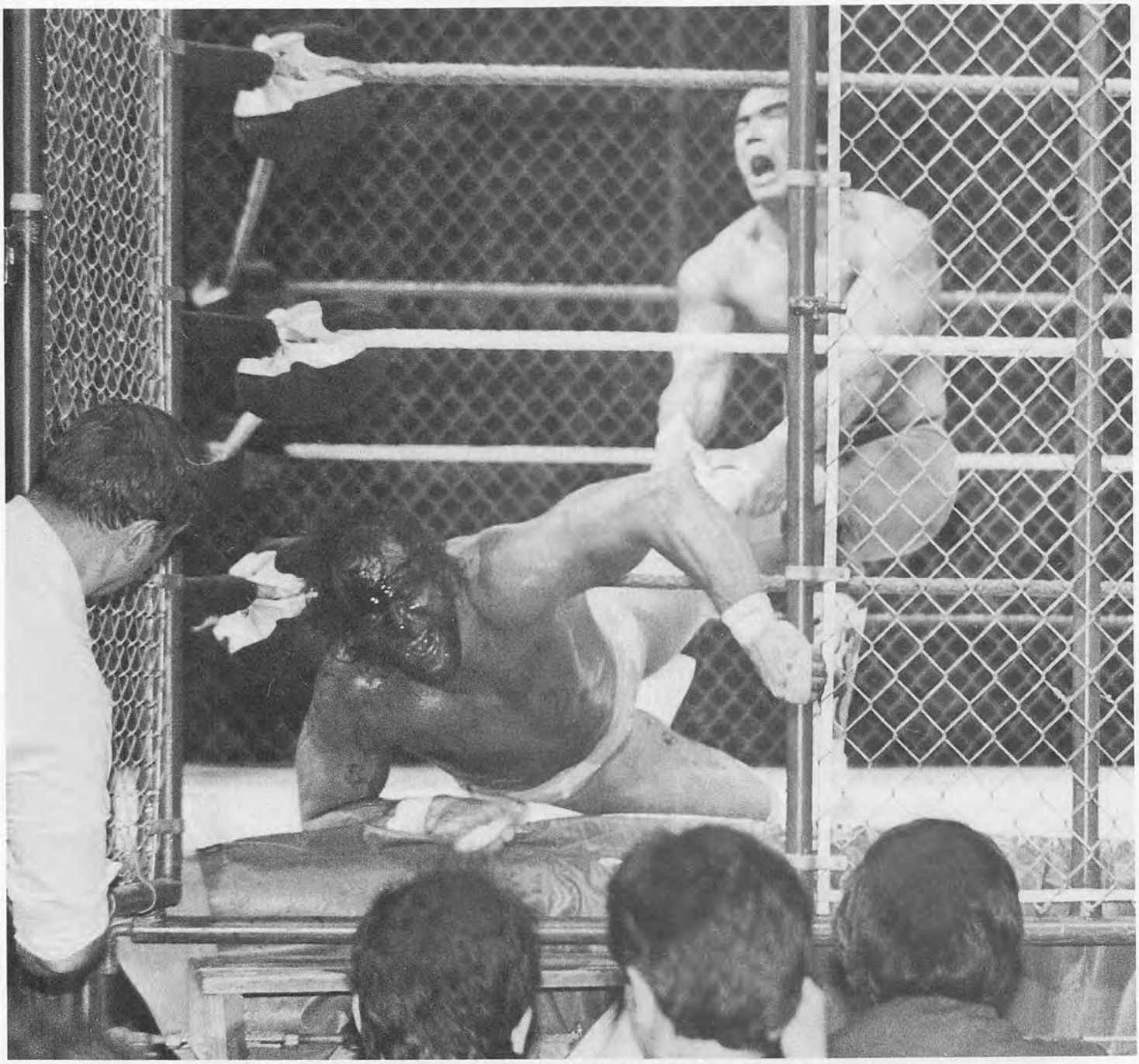
Pamela crossed a leg over Dale's. "I'm pre-med," she said. "So I want to see blood." She laughed harshly, huskily. It was a joke. Dale laughed too.

The match commenced. Things happened. Savage belly-to-bellied Steamboat. Steamboat rocked Savage back and forth in a reverse cradle, stretching the Macho's hamstrings. Savage piledrove Steamboat, compressing an already damaged neck. Steamboat blatantly faceraked and gouged Savage in a series of "martial arts" attacks. Savage taught him that he should stick to wrestling by dropping him with a back suplex. Steamboat retaliated with a beautiful dropkick and kicks and punches.

Dale and Pamela smooched.

Savage grabbed Steamboat by the arm and prepared to fling his carcass against the cage, hoping to draw blood. Forget about it. Bad mistake. Steamboat used the opportunity to tumble-sneak out the cage door. This was fail-safe defensive posture entirely in a match under these contractual conditions. Ricky Steamboat ran away first. In the immortal words of Lenny Bruce, "He hauled ass to save ass."

Steamboat ran back to the dressing room to tend to his considerable



"My palms are sweaty and I'm bleeding from the head. Is this love?"

wounds. Randy Savage, who as usual would have won his match with Steamboat on points if it had been graded by judges as in boxing, paced back and forth inside the cage like a rampaging mandrill baboon. He turned from red to purple-blue, and gritted his teeth so hard one would be amazed they didn't crack line china.

Then he stalked out of the cage, nearly ripping off the door with his bare fists. One of those fists clutched Elizabeth's emaciated arm above the elbow, leading her gracefully out by dragging her behind like a tin can on a tailpipe. His manager and wife.

"Randy Savage is still champion in my book," Pamela purred.

"What an —hole," Pamela said.

Dale looked at her.

"Yeah, but he's a great wrestler," he said, thinking his words were foolish.

Pamela rubbed her forehead, as if she was checking for scars. Or as if she was thinking.

"But they have to be that way," she said.

"This is true," Dale said. They looked at each other. She flared her nostrils, slowly. They kissed again, a good long one before the walk through the crowd to the parking lot. ■

TAG TEAM TERRORISTS: THE MOD SQUAD

[Ed. note—Driving back from Detroit to New York City after WrestleMania III, *veteran WME staff-writer Art Burns took a slight detour through Memphis to pay homage to Elvis Presley on the tenth anniversary of his death. On his way back to the Empire State, Art, ever-ready to please his editor, took one more detour to Baltimore to check out new Florida tag champs, the Mod Squad. He filed this report.]*

By ART BURNS

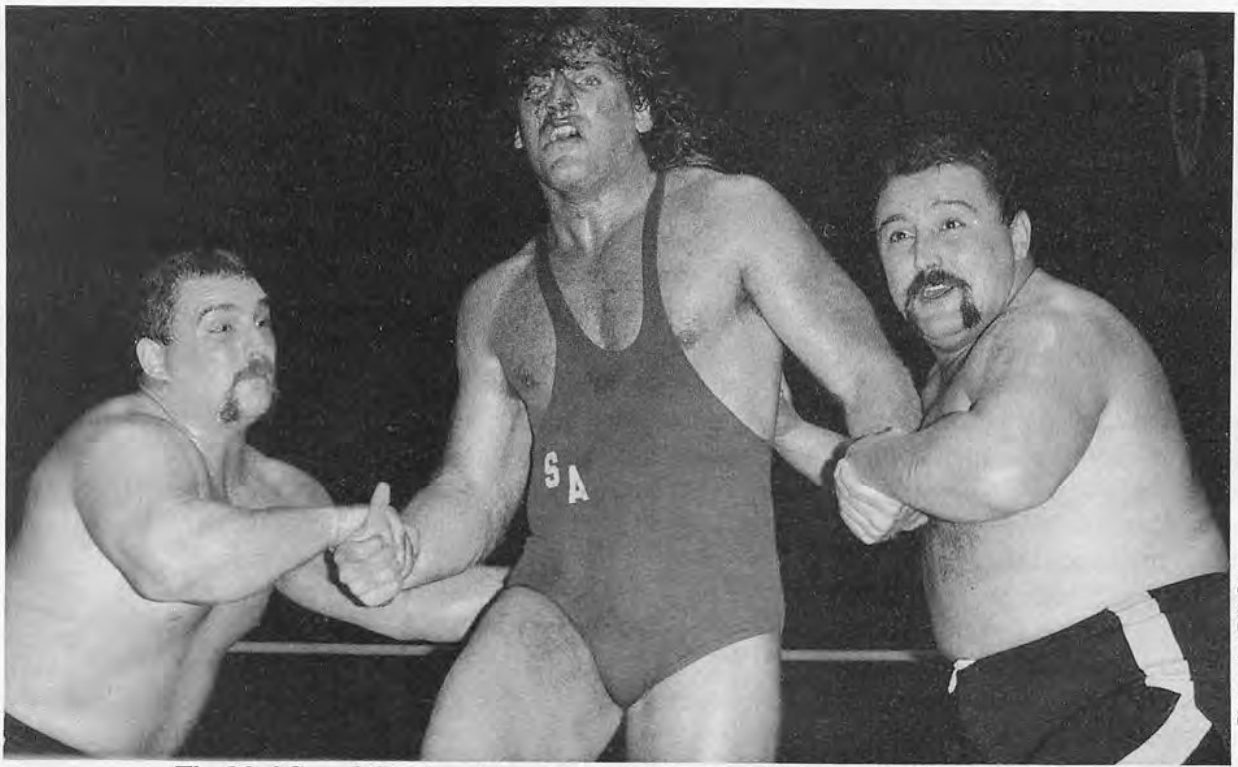
Detroit was bad enough. New York City, take me home.

Baltimore welcomed me with gray skies and a feeble, half-hearted drizzle. Just enough to be a nuisance. I pulled into the first service station I found after hitting local traffic and dialed the number that I had scrawled on my road map. Written in a drunken stupor and dictated by an incoherent editor, it was probably the wrong number, but another incoherent voice answered and I knew I had reached my party.

It was one of the Mod Squad, Basher or Spike, and they just growled. In another moment, Superstar Bill Dundee picked up. There was a helluva racket going on: it sounded like they were breaking the furniture to the accompaniment of AC/DC. The tape player was obviously turned up too loud and was distorting—it sounded great over the phone.

Dundee managed to communicate the name of the hotel the boys were staying at and I moped back into my car. I had left the door open and the seat had gotten wet from the rain, but what was worse, I had left my cigarettes on the seat. I cursed.

At least I knew where I was going—I used to work for a Baltimore daily and that hotel was well known for being the stomping ground of any wrestler or rock star that was coming through to play the Civic Center. And when a color television set came careening out of a window (and splashed down peacefully in the pool

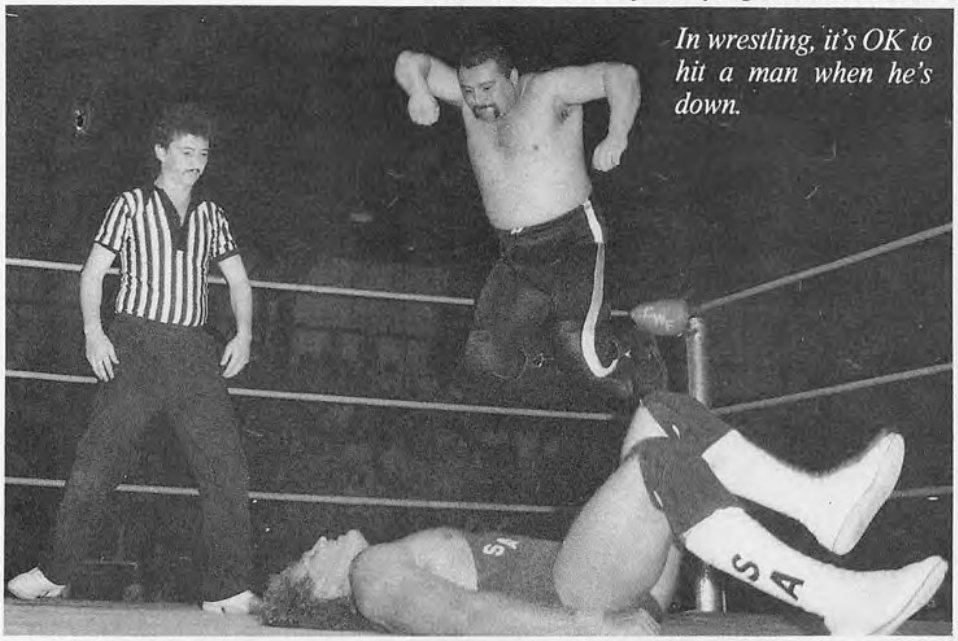


Photos by Bill Otten

The Mod Squad thrashes through the Armstrongs. They don't just look tough.

The Mod Squad may very well be the answer to the post-Road Warrior depression that has swept wrestling . They may look like refugees from a post-apocolyptic motorcycle gang, but they aren't just like every other goon with leather jackets and tough looking facial hair.

Dundee joins in the fun: trying to murder Scott Armstrong.



In wrestling, it's OK to hit a man when he's down.

Raw talent begging for some polish, about very photogenic.

without hurting anyone) I knew I had the right place.

It wasn't hard to find Dundee and his henchman: there was a crowd of women standing outside the door and behind them a few men watching. Every so often the door would open and a few young lovelies would spill out, a new crew would file in and the men would nod in disbelief. The noise only subsided when they had to flip over the tape. I waited and then knocked on the door.

Superstar Bill Dundee opened the door wearing a sweat-stained but spectacular jumpsuit, skin tight and adorned with rhinestones, and if I had not just been visiting Elvis' Graceland Mansion, I would have been mighty impressed. Dundee looked damn good. The last time I had seen him was in Nashville some years ago when he was feuding with Jerry Lawler. He was an animal back then and dished out quite a pounding. But this was the new Bill Dundee, looking sharp enough to shave with. He let me come in.

I may have been acting a bit on the unprofessional side, but I was road-weary and burnt out, and any idea I had about what those beasts were doing in that hotel room brought out the novice reporter in me. Scoop Burns. I was frothing at the bit.

To both my dismay and relief, they were just partying, dancing around on the furniture and having a good time. There was a pile of kindling as high as my waist piled up by the window and

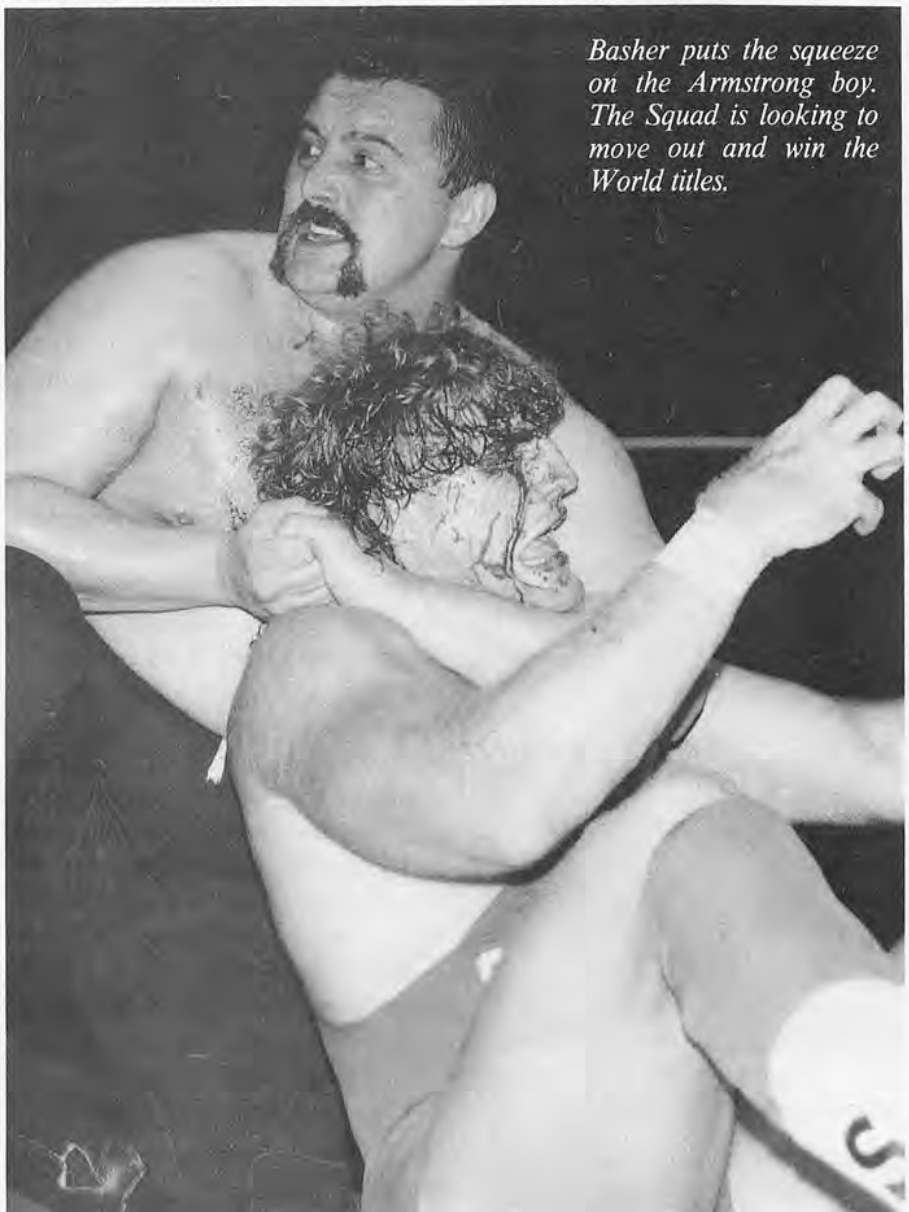
as Basher handed the same fate to one of the beds, he tossed the remains on the pile. Spike was helping a woman empty the fire extinguisher out the window before he chucked it into the pool with a cool spiral.

"We're just loosening up a bit for tonight's match," Dundee informed me. "The boys always like to get a little rowdy before they work—gives'em a nice edge over those sissy boys with the bandanas. Actually, they're moving a bit slow today—beating up the Armstrongs made them forget what real competition is."

A couple of wild-men turned tag team.

I thought back to when I was in Florida [WME June '87—Ed.] and saw The Squad tangle with the Armstrongs—it wasn't exactly a cake walk. The Armstrongs took advantage with their scientific offense and even stood up to a few minutes of Mod Squad brawling (and even managed to inflict some damage) before succumbing to the sheer ferocity of these men. Basher and Spike had the raw talent to take care of the Armstrongs but lacked the polish to do it without taking some abuse in the process. But Dundee had a good handle on things: he was molding a couple of wild-men into a tag team and that takes time.

"The boys love that metal from Down Under. Makes'em crazy." Dundee interpreted my thoughts. "AC/DC, mate. Best band ever came out of Australia." He beamed with the pride of sharing his roots with the crunging, groin-stirring sounds that came smoking out of the tape player. The Mod Squad just continued to tear up the room partying with their female fans. "There are gonna be some surprised fans tonight, mate." He beamed some more. "New tag team Champeens."



Basher puts the squeeze on the Armstrong boy. The Squad is looking to move out and win the World titles.

"Time to go now, mate," Dundee told me and ushered me out as four fresh women came in. "See ya at ringside." The horde of women still waiting their turn giggled at me as I walked down the hall.

Later that night the Mod Squad went on to lose to the Rock'n'Roll Express but not without delivering some real punishment. They were as charged up as any Superbowl champs and uncompromising in their attack. And they looked great, as nasty and dangerous as the Road Warriors, even tougher with the sequined Dundee at ringside. All they needed was a little polish, the kind that only comes with experience. Luckily they have a Superstar to guide them.

I left Baltimore with that last watered down arena beer still in my mitts and nursed it until I hit the Jersey Turnpike. I had come a long way since I first worked in Baltimore in the sixties, doing the crime beat for a sleazy tabloid with a press card jammed in my hat-band. Hell—I had come along way since *WrestleMania.* And only four-hundred miles to go. ■

Former Champ . . . Forever?

TITO SANTANA: It Could Be Now or Never

Tito Santana is off the track: this former champ may be destined to be just that, a former champ, forever, unless he can dish The Natural and move on in the WWF. The victim of a rulebreaker's conspiracy and one of the greatest over-achievers in the sport, this could be Tito's last chance to get fired up and win some gold.

By TED PIPE

Tito Santana hasn't had a day off since recovering from knee surgery, the result of a feud with Greg Valentine. As soon as his hammered joint was strong enough, he was back in the ring and hasn't had a break yet. He's a working man, a hard-working man who still believes in that Puritan but rewarding ethic of work being its own reward. So he keeps on truckin', grappling anyone he's put up against and usually winning. But he's off the track. This is one former champ who can forget about reclaiming his title.

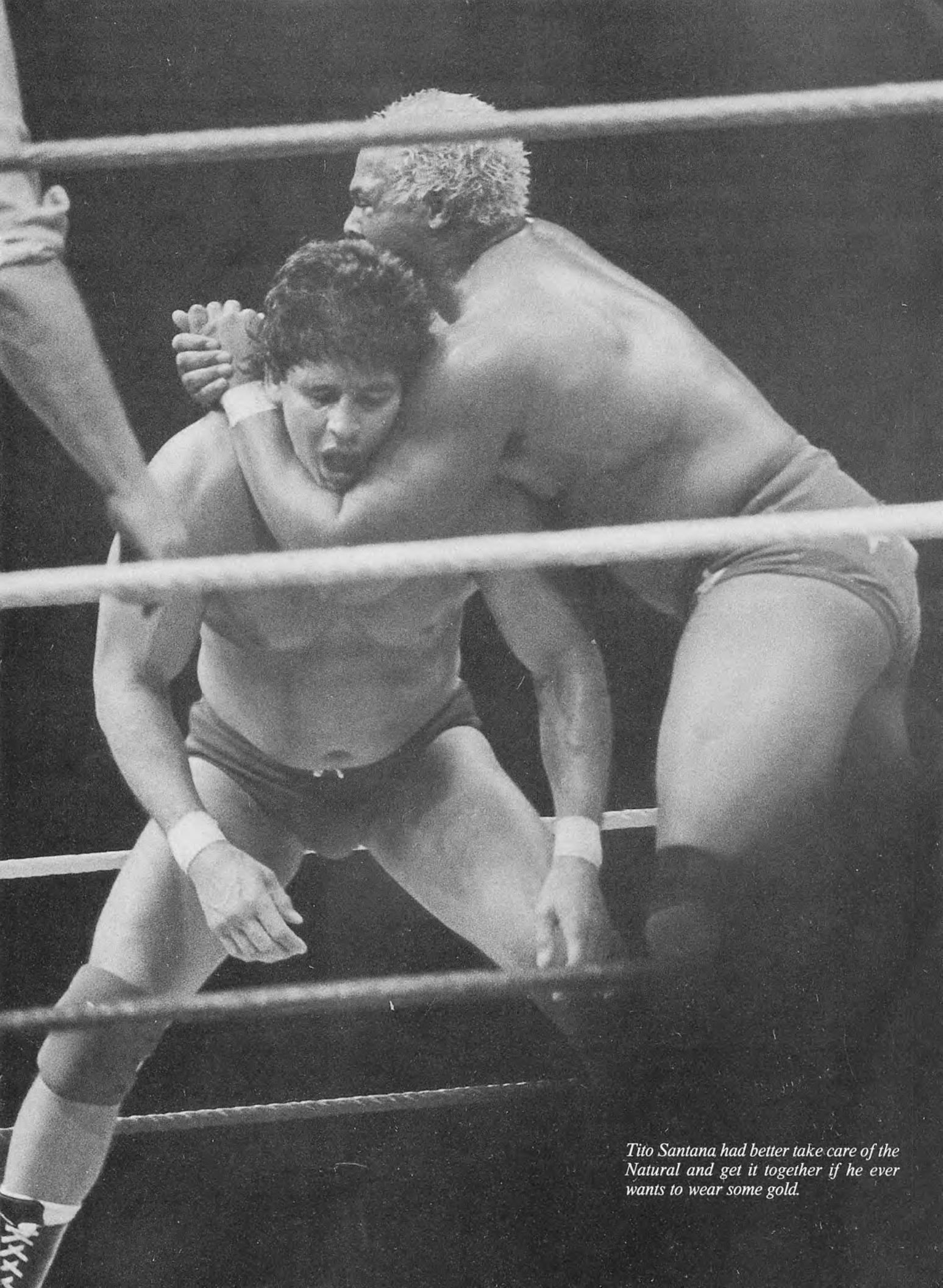
The title was, of course, the WWF's No. 2 strap, the Intercontinental Title. What seems like years ago, Tito won it from Magnificent Muraco in Boston. Tito defended against Muraco and every other rulebreaker who deserved a shot, but it was a typically underharded bashing by Greg Valentine that took it away. Arthoscopic surgery and hard work tempered with pain-killers got the injured limb back in shape for Tito to get the IC belt back in his Mexican mits. He fought well and the fans were behind him and he was, right there during his second title reign, at the height of his career. From there it was all down hill. Since then, the belt has gone from Tito to Savage and now to Rick Steamboat. Meanwhile, Tito is hunkering down with a feud with the Natural, Butch Reed. His over-achieving days are over.

There seems to be something less than natural about Butch Reed.

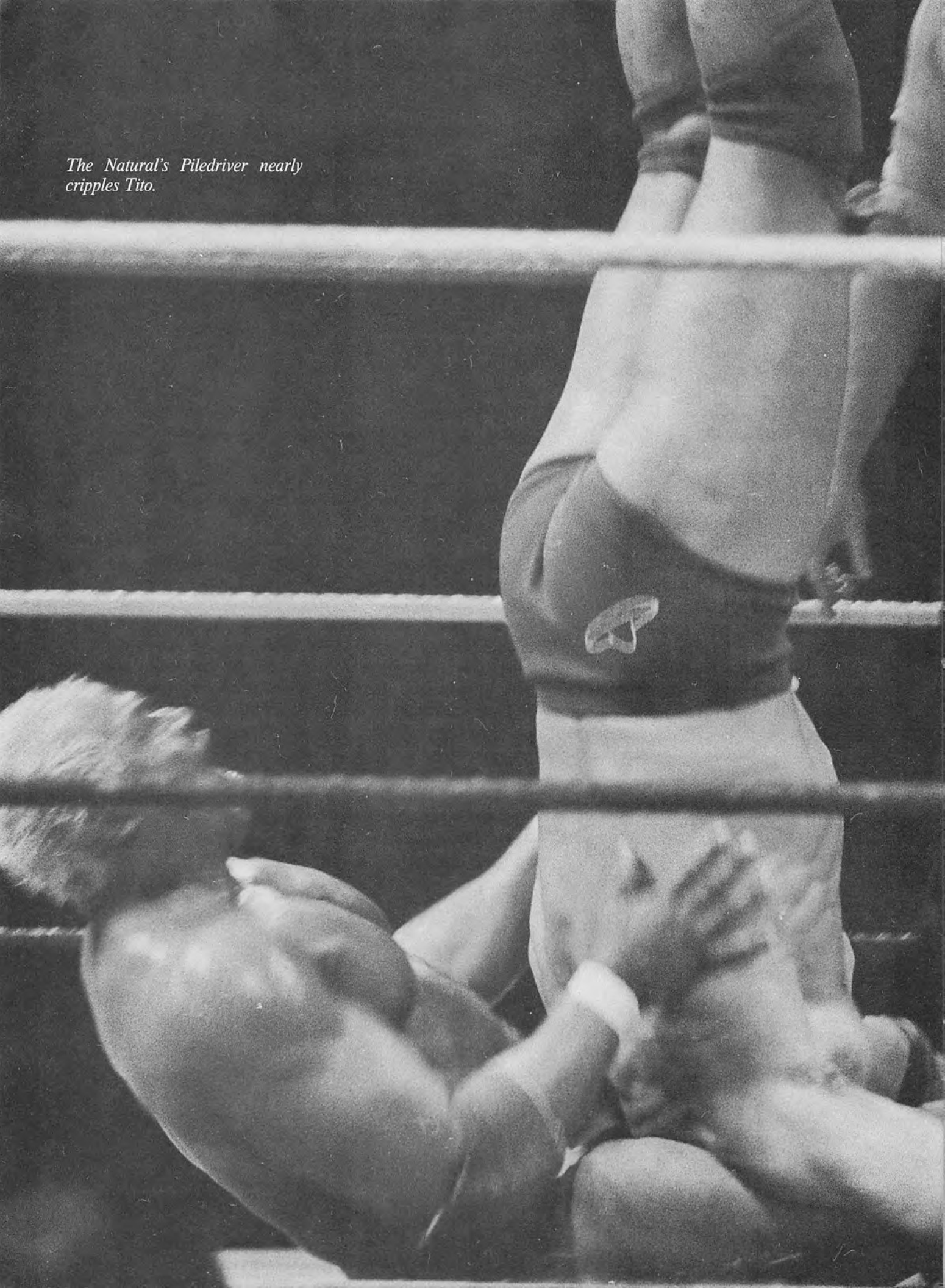
Watching Tito climb his way to the top of the heap—and stay there—was both inspiring and disheartening. Inspiring because it always is to see an athlete surpass his natural ability and reach the top of his profession. And Tito wrestled well, beating competitors that should have crippled him. Yes, it was an inspiration—obviously Tito himself was inspired, bursting with the motivation to succeed. But his title reigns were also disheartening, frustrating and depressing—for every rulebreaker in the WWF, and most important, to those that sit on the championship committee (Heenan, Mr. Fuji and Lou Albano during Tito's championships). They hated him for being such a "good worker," such an honest (they called it naive) athlete who partied with ice cream and cake. They hated his righteousness (his "lousy attitude" that made him hate anyone associated with rulebreaking) and they suspected that he was being protected by referees. So they did the only thing possible: they conspired against him to make sure that when he lost the belt it would be for good. Such things are common in the WWF, both against fan favorites and rulebreakers. But rarely do they work so well.

Tito's feud with The Natural is the

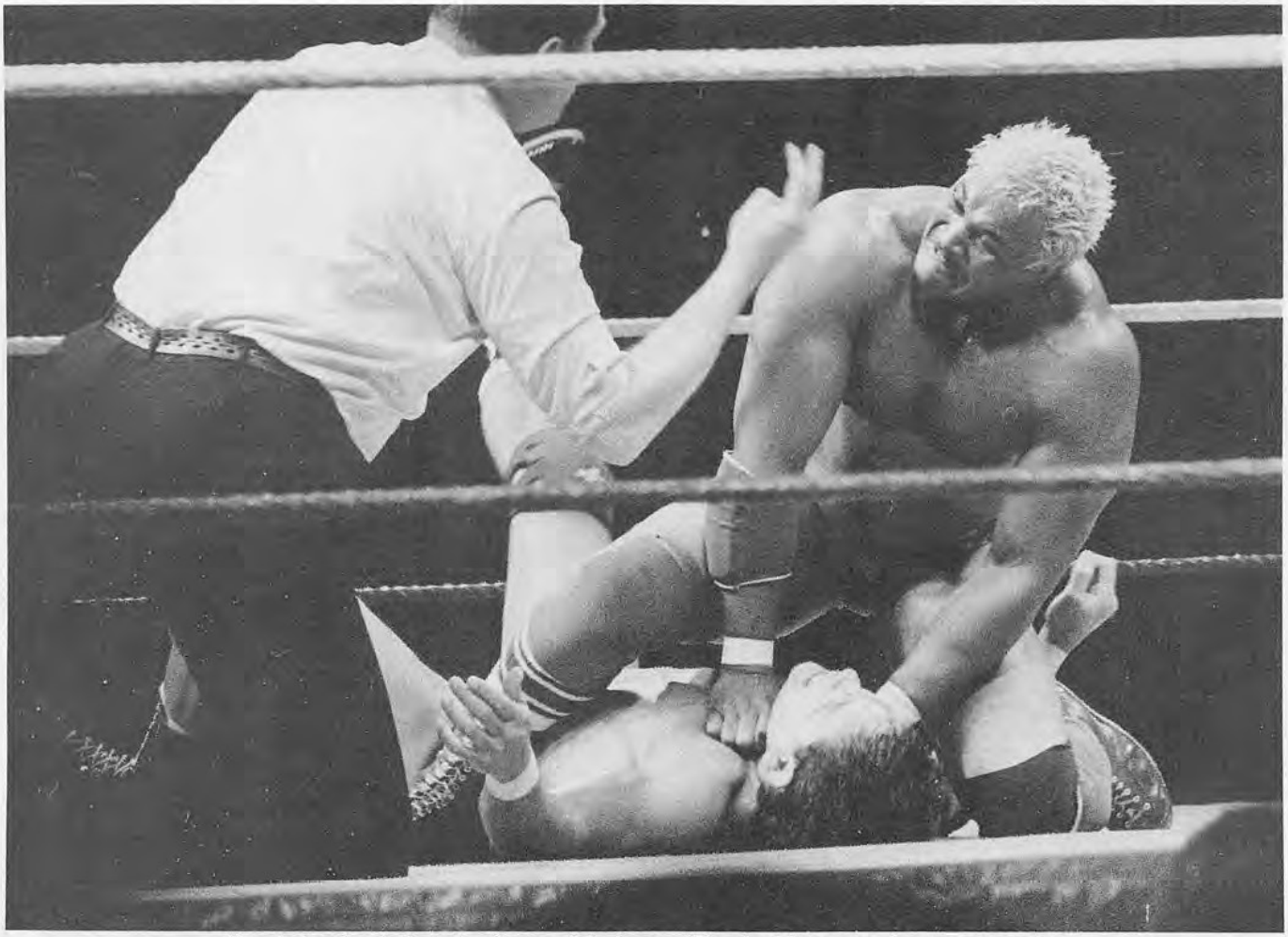
Photos by John Barrett



Tito Santana had better take care of the Natural and get it together if he ever wants to wear some gold.



The Natural's Piledriver nearly cripples Tito.



Reed simply chokes the former IC champ. Tito had better make a move soon.

last act in this tragic opera. Those championship committee members couldn't win the belt away from the fired up Santana, but when The Macho Man did it for them, they swung into action. Only a limited amount of mandatory title shots were enforced by the committee, forcing Savage to move away from Santana (which led to his defeat and another story) and Santana to look for other feuds. All this led to his participation in a fruitless match at *WrestleMania.* But Tito took things into his own hands, reminding the fans that he meant business by battering Slick. Lo and behold, he's got himself a string of matches—good ones—but meaningless ones.

Butch Reed is nobody in the WWF. He'll never win a title, never be a major contender and will never be Slick's priority (with Jim Duggan clammering around the Sheik and Volkoff). But he is a pretty tough grappler, even if his "natural" physique comes from doing steroids. And by wrestling him, Santana is just getting himself further and further away from any possible title possibilities. The rulebreakers are happy (Reed and Slick are rumored to be getting kickbacks from certain managerial forces—possibly Elizabeth—to keep Tito tied up) and some fans are happy, thinking they're seeing a good match up, but the smart fan is angry, angry with Santana for slipping to the back of the pack.

Butch Reed is nobody in the WWF . . .

Tito Santana was never a great wrestler but he achieved great things. His first title reign came at a time when rulebreakers were dominating the WWF, what with Valentine as ICC, Savage chasing Hogan and Piper running the whole show. He symbolized rule abiding wrestling and more than that, hard work. But his salad days are over: if Tito is ever going to be a serious force in the WWF, he's got to shake the Natural—beating him will never put him on the championship trail, especially not with Rick Steamboat holding the belt. In fact, Tito's best bet would be a tag team with none other than Koko B. Ware. Think of it: the two are perfect together. Tito is bigger than Koko and more experienced, Koko adds some much added charisma both in the ring and out. And with a common enemy, they could surely get together and clean house. A team like that could quickly become the No. 1 contenders if the Bulldogs fail to recapture the titles soon enough.

The time is now for Tito Santana to make his move. He may have been the victim of a rulebreaking conspiracy, but he can escape it, break any hold maverick committee members have on his career. All it takes is a little motivation, a little of the old work ethic, something he has always had. ■

Last year's champs the Road Warriors in this year's fashions (left). Above, manager Paul Ellering displays the Warriors' calling cards.

The Midnight Express with Jim Cornette and Bib Bubba; their smiles didn't last all night.

Underdogs Mike Rotundo and Ronnie Garvin.

Photos by Robert Riddick

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A TAG TEAM TRADITION:

THE CROCKETTE CUP

Once again, the Crockette Memorial Tag Team Tournament exuded excellence and excitement. This year was a special event, however, as the Superpowers crushed the opposition for their comrade Magnum TA in an emotionally charged evening that made wrestling history.

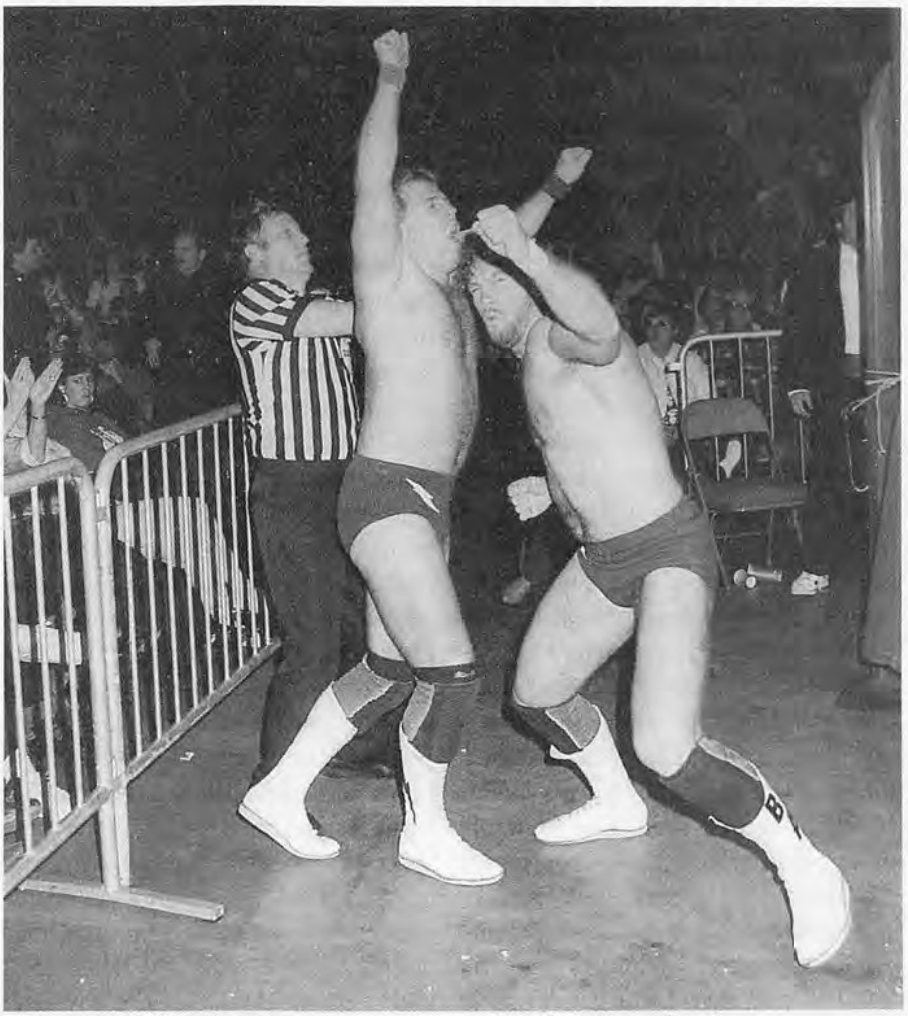
By ROBERT E. RIDDICK, JR.

After two days of defeating every tag team put in front of them, the Superpowers, Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff, defeated Lex Lugar and Tully Blanchard in the final match of the second annual Jim Crockett Sr. Memorial Cup tag team tournament to win the beautiful trophy and a check for one million dollars.

This year the tournament was held in the Baltimore Arena in Baltimore, Maryland, the sight of some of the greatest matches in wrestling history. And the weekend of April tenth and eleventh was certainly no exception. As opposed to last year's one day tournament in New Orleans, this year's tournament was conducted on two days, with an added feature match on each night. Fans from as far away as Texas, Chicago, and California all made the trip to Baltimore.

An hour before the seven o' clock starting time, local news stations around Baltimore held interviews with many of the top stars in the tournament including World Champion Ric Flair, Mike Rotundo, Barry Windham, and Jim Cornette and the Midnight Express. By the time the interviews were completed, the bell rang for the opening rounds of the tournament. Although there were ten top seeded teams, only eight of the ten received byes in the first round. The other fourteen unseeded teams would have to give it their all to reach the second round.

Although all twenty-four teams would see action on the first evening, there were a number of surprises. One of the biggest being "Mulkeymania", Randy



The Armstrongs made a surprisingly strong showing.

Ivan Koloff didn't make it past the first round—maybe the Russian Bear is getting old.

and Bill Mulkey who defeated the highly touted team of the Gladiators on WTBS to win a trip to Baltimore. Although the crowd was definitely behind the two young men, they were defeated by Denny Brown and Todd Champion. Steve Keirn, in one of his first matches since returning to professional wrestling, teamed with George South as they wrestled to a draw with Mike Graham and Nelson Royal, thus eliminating both teams from the tournament. The Mod Squad with manager Bill Dundee faced Lex Lugar and Tully Blanchard with James J. Dillon in an all villains match won by the two Horsemen. But the biggest surprise of the night was the performance of Bob and Brad Armstrong. Although many people didn't give this team a chance of getting past their opening round pairing with Ivan Koloff and Vladimir Peitrov, the Armstrongs proved their worth as a team by soundly defeating the Russians and the top seeded team of Arn Anderson and Kevin Sullivan. The final match of the first night pitted "The Rock", Ole Anderson against Big Bubba Rogers in a Steel Cage Match. The fans were behind Ole all the way as the wily veteran took everything Rogers could dish out before piledriving the big man for the win.

The next day, before the matches, the wrestlers unwound by walking the streets of the beautiful city of Baltimore. Although they were constantly stared and pointed at, the wrestlers were still able to relax and enjoy themselves. "Saturday nights all right for fighting" and what fights they were! It was an evening that saw Lugar and Blanchard defeat the Japanese team of Giant Baba and Mr. Takagi rather handily. Also that night, the Midnight Express gained a disqualification victory over the Road Warriors, when the Legion of Doom were caught using Cornette's tennis racket on the Express. The Superpowers captured their own victories over the number one seeded team of Rick Rude and the Raging Bull and the Midnight Express. The stage was then set for the final match; the Superpowers vs. Lugar and Blanchard. But before that match, Barry Windham challenged NWA World's Champion Nature Boy Ric Flair to yet another title match in what might have been called Windham's "now or never" match. It was all that a World's Title match should be and more. Although the two men shook hands at the onset of the match, it wasn't long before they began to brawl. Every conceivable finishing move was applied by both men in an attempt to get a clear-cut victor. Barry, however, was again denied the gold belt when Flair, even the opportunist, reversed Windham's roll up and pulled Barry's trunks to pin him. Although the champion pinned his challenger illegally, it was Flair's first real title defense in a long time without the Horsemen running in to aid him.

Before the details of the final match, there was one special highlight that really made the Crockett Cup very special this year. It marked the return of "The Boss", Magnum T.A. Words cannot describe the ovation the huge crowd so deservedly gave this great and courageous athlete. There weren't many dry eyes in the arena when Terry walked down the aisle on his own power, and responded to the cheering crowd with a wave of his hand some blown kisses. As Terry stood at the end of the aisle by the ring, Dusty and Nikita entered the arena for the final match, and America's Team, Rhodes and Allen were reunited as the two close friends embraced in a very emotional moment. After Rhodes left Allen, Koloff, Allen's one time nemesis, also gave Magnum a compassionate hug. After these emotion filled moments, Magnum returned to the dressing room, and Blanchard and Lugar were faced with dealing with a charged up Superpowers. Nothing could stop Rhodes and Koloff from prevailing this night. No matter what Lugar and Blanchard tried, Koloff and Rhodes would not be beaten. Even after J.J. Dillon ripped off Nikita's neck brace, the Superpowers did not bow down. It wasn't long before Lugar and Blanchard were a beaten team.

The winners were presented the huge cup and the one million dollar check by Mrs. Jim Crockett, Sr. and Mr. Jim Crockett, Jr. After the presentation, the Superpowers were declared the 1987 Crockett Cup winners, and the cup will remain with them until next year's tournament. Afterward, a jubilant Rhodes said, "This one was for Maggie Mae. I told the people that he would be here with Nikki and myself and he was. Nikita Koloff, my super partner and I dedicate this victory to my America's Team partner Magnum TA!"

That ended the greatest tag team tournament held anywhere. Baltimore, Maryland, with its beautiful city sights and people, would make the ideal home of the Crockett Cup tournament every year. Congratulations go out to the Superpowers, Nikita Koloff and Dusty Rhodes, as well as to Promoter Gary Juster of Baltimore, Maryland and the staff of Jim Crockett Promotions for a job well done. The only improvement that next years cup could have would be Magnum TA's appearance as a participant again in the tournament next year doing what he does best: WRESTLING! ■

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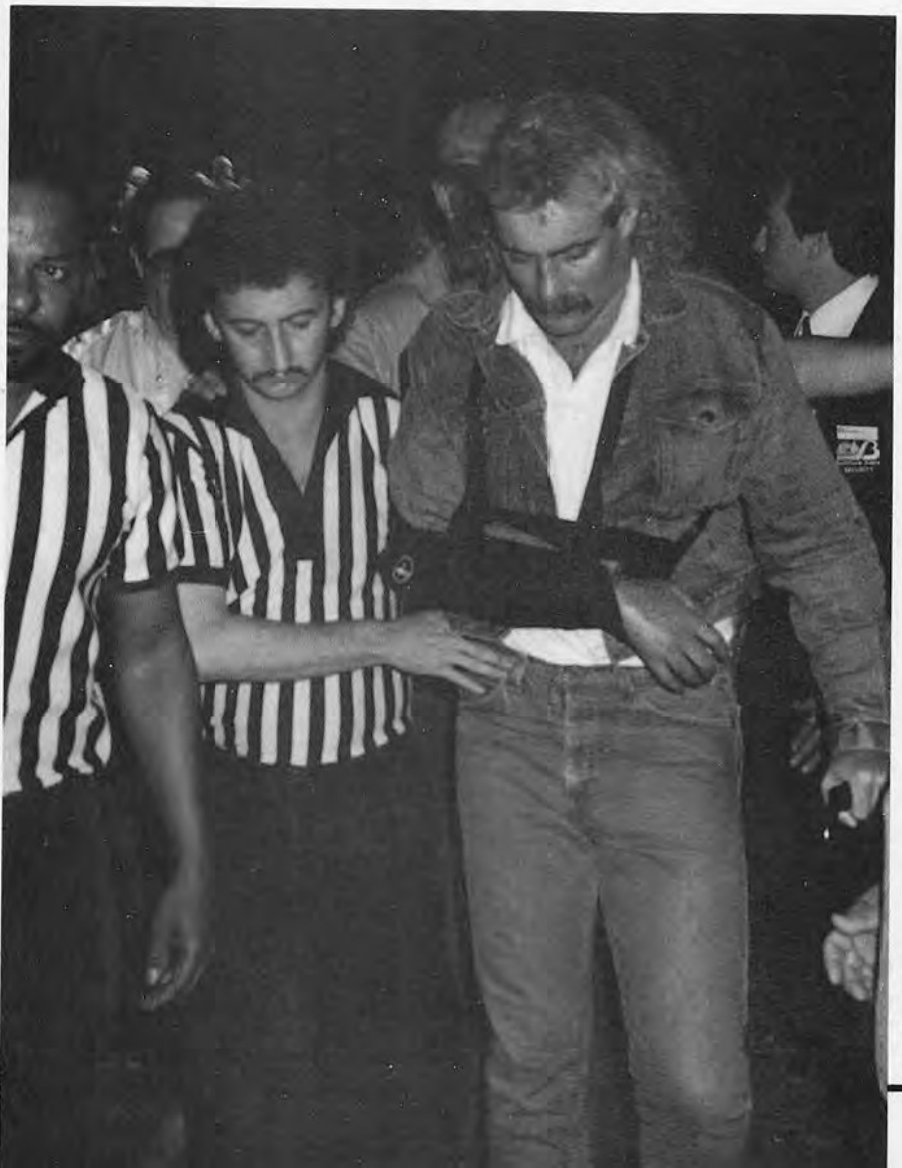
Magnum TA Action Gallery:

RETURN OF THE BOSS

It was the return of The Boss, the first of appearances by Magnum T.A. since his crippling auto accident and it was one of the most moving events to take place in any arena. The Crockette Cup (see story page 58—Ed.) played host to Magnum's return and then, to a stunning victory by his comrades Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff. After the tournament, Dusty dedicated the award to Magnum.



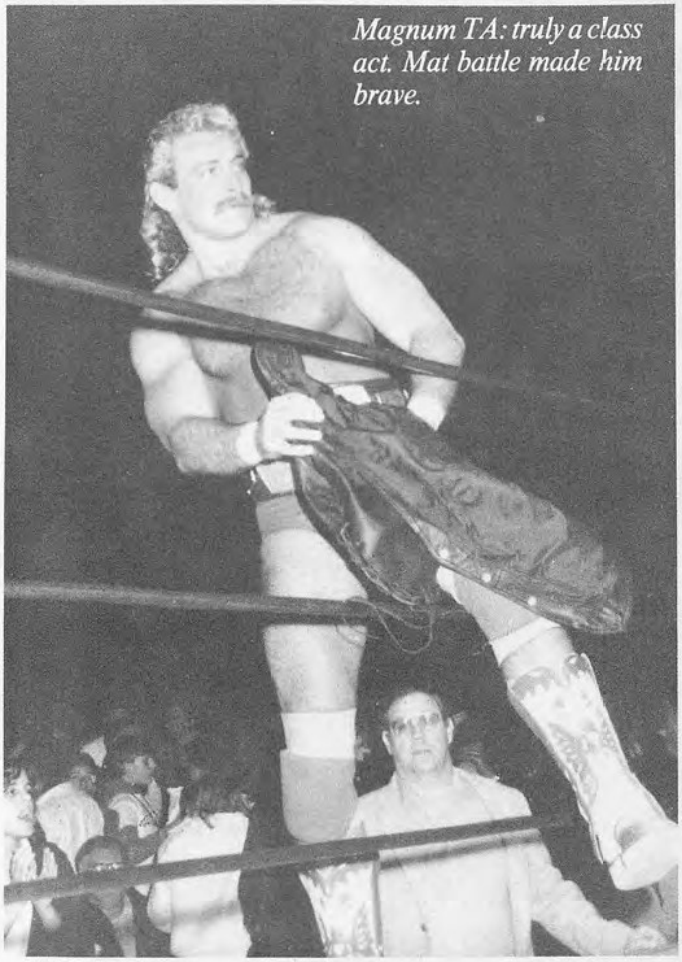
We all miss Terry Allen's presence in the ring and wish him the best and a speedy recovery, but what we'd like to do is celebrate his accomplishments rather than re-hash his tragedy. And in that light, we are proud to present this special Magnum TA Action Gallery.

Magnum brought new pride to the United States Heavyweight Title and defended it with honor and guts. His feuds with Tully Blanchard will be remembered for their murderous passion and bloodshed. Indeed, Magnum has been through the trenches, being battered by the best, including Nikita Koloff who would later defend the honor of his once arch foe.

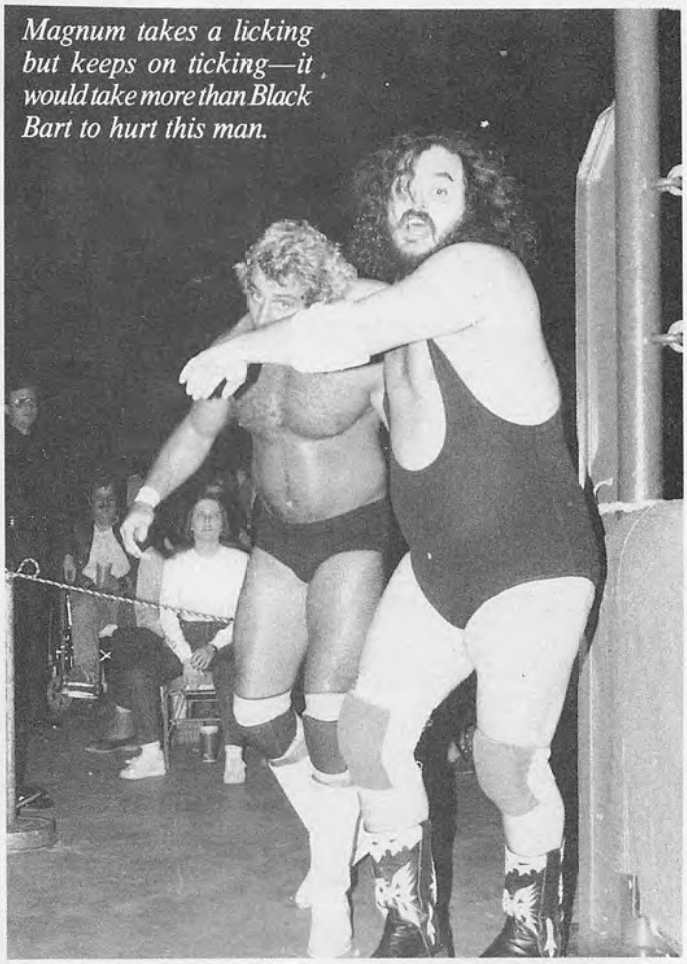
The Belly-to-Belly Suplex may be the single maneuver most fans associate with Magnum, but his arsenal was chock full of scientific and post-scientific maneuvers; the suplexes and piledrivers, the neckbreakers and aerial maneuvers were all there. Even rule-breakers were in awe of the man's raw talent.

Magnum TA remains one of wrestling's most popular stars, a true hero who has shown his courage and strength, in the ring and out. It may be some time before Terry Allen is ready to return to the ring, but in the meanwhile we can savor these grisly-sweet memories. ■

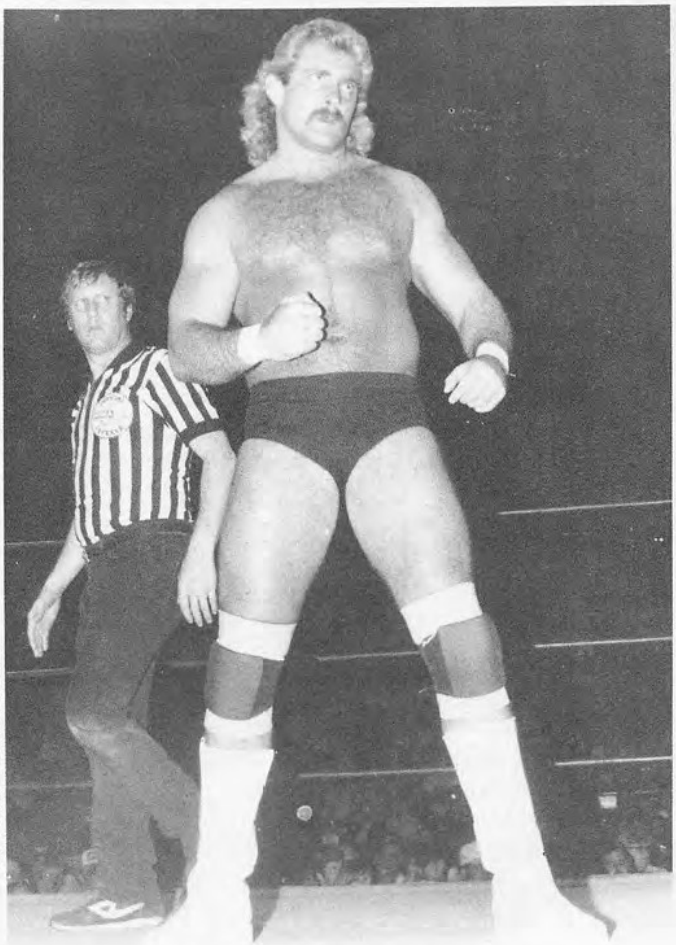
Magnum's appearance was one of the most emotionally charged events in the history of wrestling.

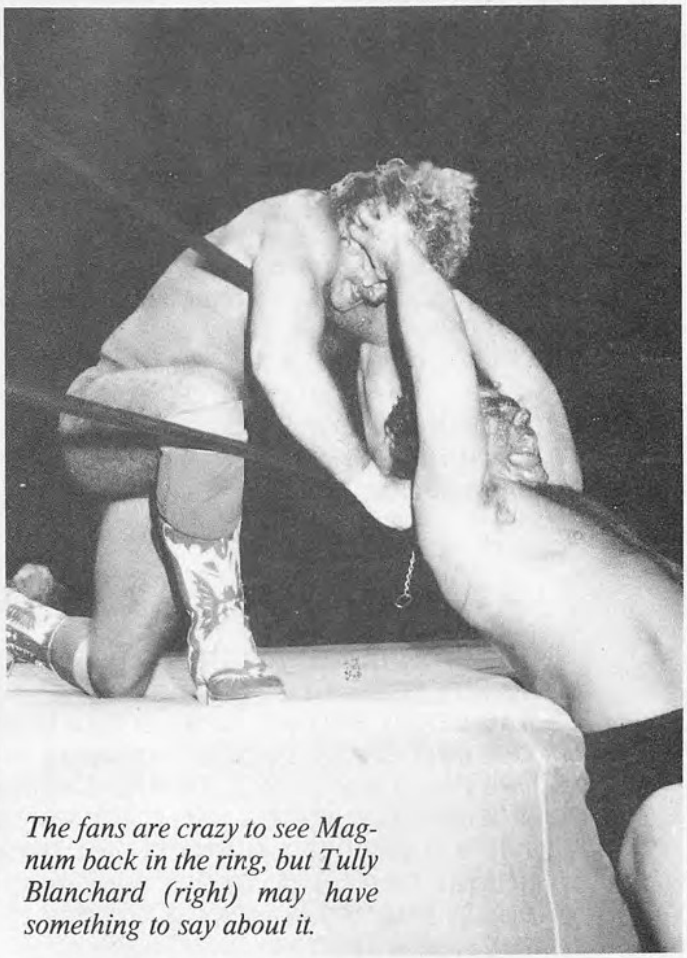


Magnum TA: truly a class act. Mat battle made him brave.



Magnum takes a licking but keeps on ticking—it would take more than Black Bart to hurt this man.





The fans are crazy to see Magnum back in the ring, but Tully Blanchard (right) may have something to say about it.

Photos by Robert Riddick

OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

Jake Roberts and Butch Reed are both trying to move up in the ratings.

WRESTLING'S TOP TWENTY

1. **RIC FLAIR,** NWA World Champion
2. **HULK HOGAN,** WWF World Champion
3. **KEVIN VON ERICH,** World Class World Champion
4. **ONE MAN GANG,** UWF World Champion
5. **RICKY STEAMBOAT,** WWF Intercontinental Champion
6. **NIKITA KOLOFF,** NWA U.S. Champion
7. **HARLEY RACE,** WWF King of the Ring Tournament champion
8. **NICK BOCKWINKLE,** AWA World Champion
9. **TULLY BLANCHARD,** NWA TV champion
10. **RANDY SAVAGE,** WWF contender
11. **SAVANNAH JACK,** UWF TV champion
12. **LEX LUGAR,** NWA contender
13. **AL MADRIL,** World Class contender
14. **ADRIAN ADONIS,** WWF contender
15. **BAD NEWS ALLAN,** Southern champion
16. **MISTY BLUE SIMMS,** NWA Women's champion
17. **PAUL ORNDORFF,** WWF contender
18. **BARRY WINDHAM,** NWA contender
19. **EXOTIC ADRIAN STREET,** South East Champion
20. **BRUISER BRODY,** Bruiser Bordy, Traveling Mercenary of Wrestling

TAG-TEAMS

1. **THE HART FOUNDATION,** Bret Hart and Jim Neidhart; WWF champions
2. **MANNY FERNANDEZ** and **RICK RUDE,** NWA champions
3. **BAD LEROY BROWN** and **WILD BILL IRWIN,** UWF champions
4. **THE BRITISH BULLDOGS, DYNAMITE KID** and **DAVEY BOY SMITH:** WWF contenders
5. **THE ROAD WARRIORS, ANIMAL** and **HAWK;** NWA contenders
6. **THE DINGO WARRIOR** and **LANCE VON ERICH,** World Class champions
7. **THE MAGNIFICENT MURACO** and **COWBOY BOB ORTON,** WWF contenders
8. **RONNIE GARVIN** and **BARRY WINDHAM,** NWA U.S. champions
9. **DUSTY RHODES** and **NIKITA KOLOFF,** Crockette Cup Winners
10. **THE NEW BREED,** Florida champions

OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

Hulk Hogan

WWF

1. Hulk Hogan
2. Rick Steamboat
3. Harley Race
4. Randy Savage
5. Hercules Hernandez
6. Jim Duggan
7. Jake Roberts
8. Andre the Giant
9. The Honky Tonk Man
10. Killer Khan

NWA

1. Ric Flair
2. Nikita Koloff
3. Tully Blanchard
4. Barry Windham
5. Dusty Rhodes
6. Dick Murdoch
7. Lex Lugar
8. Rick Rude
9. Ronnie Garvin
10. Jimmy Garvin

Ric Flair

AWA

1. Nick Bockwinkel
2. Larry Zbyszko
3. Jimmy Snuka
4. Colonel DeBeers
5. Silo Sam
6. Jerry Lawler
7. Curt Hennig
8. Johnny Rick
9. Ken Timbs
10. Greg Gangne

Nick Bockwinkel

MANAGERS

1. Bobby Heenan
2. Jimmy Hart
3. Skandor Akbar
4. J.J. Dillon
5. Jim Cornette
6. Bill Dundee
7. Slick
8. Sir Oliver Humperdink
9. Paul Jones
10. The Wizard

One Man Gang

UWF

1. One Man Gang
2. Savannah Jack
3. Ted DiBiase
4. Terry Gordy
5. Terry Taylor
6. Sting
7. The Angel of Death
8. Buddy Roberts
9. Eddie Gilbert
10. Michael Hayes

WORLD CLASS

1. Kevin Von Erich
2. Al Madril
3. Lance Von Erich
4. Crusher Yarkov
5. Steve Simpson
6. The Dingo warrior
7. Black Bart
8. Brian Adias
9. Killer Brooks
10. Bobby Fulton

Kevin Von Erich

FLORIDA

1. Bad News Allan
2. Kevin Sullivan
3. Scott Hall
4. Mike Rotundo
5. Dusty Rhodes
6. Jimmy Valiant
7. The Sheik
8. Kareem Muhammad
9. Chris Champoin
10. Mike Graham

Lex Lugar

WOMEN

1. Misty Blue Simms
2. Sherri Martel
3. Wendi Richter
4. Debbie Combs
5. Candi Divine
6. Luna Vachon
7. Cat LeRoux
8. Peggy Lee
9. Linda Dallas
10. The Lock

THE LAST PAGE

The final word this month from Wrestling's MAIN EVENT!

NASTY RONNIE:
A Serious Commitment to Mayhem

Photo by Bill Otten

Nasty Savage and Sir Oliver Humperdink, keeping Florida dangerous.

Outlaw wrestling gangs partying in Florida's most radical dunes, protecting their homestead with Stratocasters and Flying V's. The gutty growl of a pack of ATV's rumbles across the beach and out over the ocean. I have to wonder—does the moon hear their music? Nasty Ronnie lets loose a howl and the partying continues—the animals are devouring everything in sight. Beer is disappearing as quickly as the brave or crazy women that have wandered out looking for a good time while the mystical aroma of burning herbs wafts through the air. There is much singing and dancing. You could call it a lifestyle—you could call it Indulgence.

Nasty Ronnie knows what he's doing, he's no slouch, no dilletante. Nothing he does is soft. And in a world where there's so much wrong with this so-called rock/wrestling connection, his presence is dangerous and quite welcome. The problem has always been that these grapplefolk flirting with rock'n'roll got in on the wrong side of the bed: just coz you can be mean in the ring don't mean squat in the rock arena. Hard, driving rock'n'roll is never made by dabblers. But a man who can make a record that makes you want to kill your parents (metal like it oughtta be) can certainly be a threat when he takes the managerial reigns firmly in paw and cracks the whip as hard as he plays, especially when he's handling Lock and Luna.

Nasty Ronnie has been around the world with his band Nasty Savage, but he is just beginning to terrorize the Florida mat scene. A long time friend of Kevin Sullivan, Nasty has worked his way into a heavy spiritual groove that manifests itself as cut-throat metal-music on stage and those evil vixens Lock and Luna in the ring. Together they have had fairly little difficulty thrashing through the competition they've faced and arresting the attention of wrestling fans.

Nasty and the outlaw wrestling gang he calls a band are keeping the edge on this music and grappling thing—no pansy novelty one-shot records for them. Their latest record is called "Indulgence" and it shows a serious commitment to mayhem. And that's what it's all about.

■ HANDSOME MICK WILD

WRESTLING'S

MAIN EVENT

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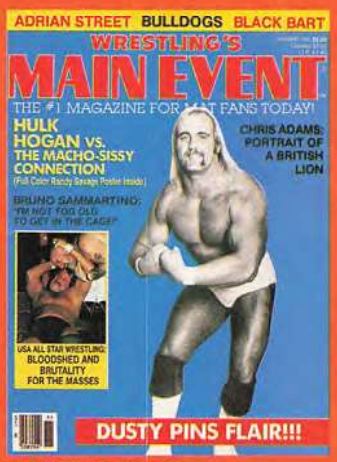

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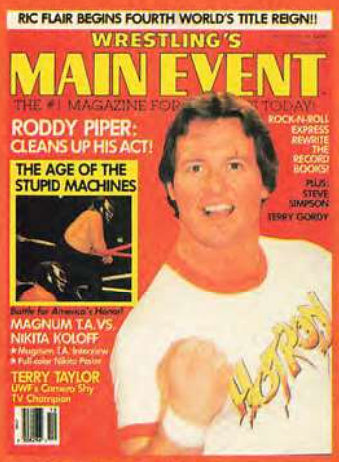

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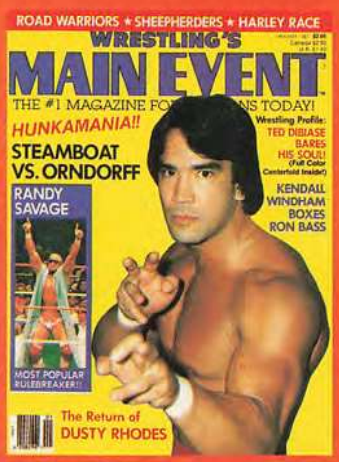

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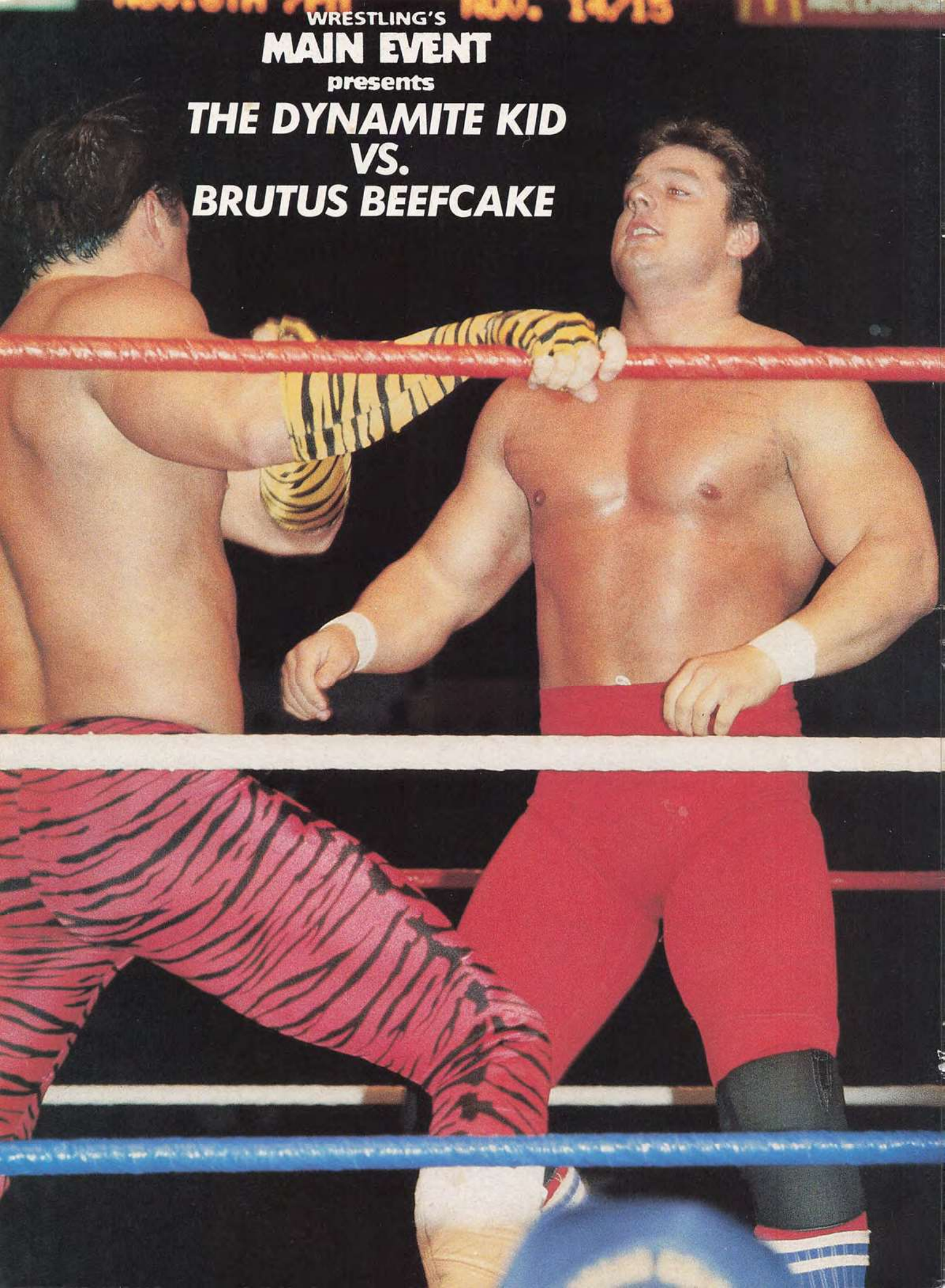
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